

POPULAR CUSTOMS,
SPORTS, AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE
SOUTH OF ITALY.

BY CHARLES MAC EARLANE.



I.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following papers originally appeared in the Penny Magazine, at different periods between the years 1834 and 1845. But they have been revised, and some additional matter has been introduced in them.

Most of the subjects were suggested by the designs of Bartolommeo Pinelli. With a few exceptions, the papers were written from memory. They are the recollections of what I saw and heard in the South of Italy, between the years 1816 and 1827, and more particularly among the peasantry and common people. They relate, almost entirely, to matters which seem to be considered as too trivial to merit the attention of writing tourists, and which are not easily to be learned by the hasty traveller along the highroads, or by any one that does not wander into nooks and corners, and live much among the people of the country. Few,—very few,—of the materials of these notes are to be

found in Italian books. The literature of Italy has, unhappily, for three hundred years, laboured under a nightmare of pedantry; and of all sedentary men of letters the Southern Italian are, perhaps, the most sedentary. Some of them are now making better signs. I only speak of them as I knew them.

Many of the things which I have attempted to describe are now passing rapidly away. The customs, sports, and observances may linger on for ages in the remote districts, but there is every appearance that, in the cities, they will soon die out and be forgotten of men. Naples, when I last—and very reluctantly—quitted it, in 1827, was not what I had found it in 1816. But, since my departure, the amazingly increased number of foreign travellers, the facilities afforded by steam-navigation, the opening of new roads, the establishing of schools, the reign of a young king who is not that enemy to all innovation which his predecessors were, and many inevitable and obvious circumstances, have vastly accelerated the change, and have more and more assimilated Naples to the other civilized capitals of Europe. Thus, some of my notes may be regarded as a record of things

which are already past, and which have left hardly any other record of their existence behind them.

These recollections of mine may possibly afford materials for another volume. My memory may now and then play me a trick ; but, from my long familiarity with the country and the people, and the frequency and fondness with which I dwell upon them, and the happy days I spent there, I flatter myself that no serious error (if the word *serious* may, in any mode, be applied to these trifling sketches) will escape or has hitherto escaped me.

Though, in case of my revisiting Naples, I should certainly grieve at the dethronement of Policinella, the orderliness and stillness of the Molo, the disappearance of the flower-pot Calessi, and of my merry old friends the Lazzaroni, I heartily wish the Neapolitans success and happiness in their present transition state. It were ungrateful in me to do less, or ever to forget the kindness I received from all classes of them, during a long series of years.

C. M. F.

June, 1846.

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POPULAR CUSTOMS, &c.

OF THE

SOUTH OF ITALY.

MACCARONI-EATERS.

MACCARONI, or *maccheroni*,—the learned are divided as to the orthography and etymology of the word,—is the principal food of the poorer, and the favourite dish of all classes of Neapolitans. So much is this the case that the people of Naples have had for many ages the nickname of “*Mangia-maccaroni*,” or maccaroni-eaters.

A fine English lady at Paris once asked a gentleman of her own country who had recently arrived from Italy, “On what sort of a tree maccaroni grew?” But, in all probability, most of our readers who have seen the substance do not partake of her ignorance, but know that it is made with wheaten flour.

“*Grano duro*,” or “*Grano del Mar Nero*,” the small hard-grained wheat grown in the Russian territories on the Black Sea, and shipped at Odessa and Taganrok, is considered the best for the purpose, and was once imported into Naples for the maccaroni manufacturers. As that kingdom is essentially agricultural itself, the importation of this foreign corn was felt as an evil; but as the manufacturers always declared they could not produce good maccaroni without it, and as a deterioration in the quality of the national dish would be felt as a serious national calamity, the import trade continued to be allowed, though the Neapolitan agriculturist frequently

could not find a market for his home-grown corn. A wiser step, however, than prohibition, was to procure and cultivate the particular hard grain in their own territories, and this has now been done for many years in Apulia, where the soil and climate are considered as most favourable. The grano duro is chiefly shipped at Manfredonia, Barletta, Bari, and other ports on the Adriatic, and is sold in the Neapolitan market under the name of the port it comes from.

The best macaroni is made entirely of the grano duro; but, in the inferior qualities, this is sometimes mixed with soft wheat. The conversion of the flour—which is somewhat more coarsely ground than that intended for bread—into the long, round strings, called macaroni, is effected by a very simple process. With the addition of water alone, the flour is worked up into paste, and this paste is kneaded for a length of time, by a heavy, loaded block of wood, which beats into the trough where the paste is deposited; this block or piston is attached to a beam acting as a lever, whose fulcrum is near to the block, whilst the other extremity of the beam is some eight or ten feet from the fulcrum. One or more men or boys seat themselves astride at the farther end of this beam, and, descending with their own weight, and springing up by putting their feet to the ground, give the requisite reciprocating motion to the lever. They, in fact, play at see-saw with the block at the shorter end of the lever; and the effect produced on the eye of a stranger by a large manufactory where several of these machines and a number of sturdy fellows, nearly naked and all bobbing up and down, are at work, has something extremely ludicrous in it. When the paste has been sufficiently kneaded, it is forced, by simple pressure, through a number of circular holes, the sizes of which determine the name to be given to the substance. That of superior diameter is macaroni, that of smaller is vermicelli, and that smaller still is called fedelini. The macaroni is hollow throughout, and many persons have been puzzled to know how it is formed into these long tubes. Nothing is more simple. Over each

of the larger holes meant for macaroni a small copper bridge is erected, which is sufficiently elevated to permit the paste to pass under it into the hole: from this bridge depends a copper wire which goes right through the hole, and of course leaves hollow the paste that descends through the hole. Such of my readers as have seen our common clay-pipes for smoking manufactured, will readily understand this, for this part of the process is the same for macaroni as for pipes. There are some minor distinctions in the preparation of these respective articles which it would be tedious to explain, but the material and main processes are the same in both. When the paste has been forced through the holes, like wire through a wire-drawer's plate, a workman takes up the macaroni or vermicelli and hangs it across a line to dry. From the long kneading it has received, the substance is very consistent, and dries in unbroken strings that are two or three yards in length.

Besides macaroni, vermicelli, and fedelini, which are in most general use, the Neapolitans make from paste similarly prepared an almost infinite variety of other culinary articles, some of which are long, narrow, and flat, like ribbons,—some broad and thin, like sheets of paper,—some round, like balls,—some in the shape of beans, or smaller, like peas, &c. &c. To each of these the copious Neapolitan dialect has affixed a distinctive name. The vocabulary is thus immense! After those we have mentioned, however, the greatest favourites are, *Lassagna*, *Gnocchi*, and *Strangola-prevete** (the last an odd designation, signifying “strangle, or choke priest!”).

Manufactories of a like nature exist at Genoa, and in some other parts of the peninsula; but the Genoese mix saffron with their paste, which gives it a yellow colour; and the Neapolitans, proud of the only manufacture in which they excel, treat with great contempt the similar productions of all the rest of Italy. It must be allowed, indeed, even by the unprejudiced, that their macaroni

* *Prevete* (Neapolitan for the Italian word *Prete*), Priest.

is by far the best. It is made, of course, throughout the whole of this macaroni-eating kingdom; but the best is manufactured on the coast of the Bay of Naples, about La Torre del Greco and La Torre dell' Annunziata, two towns through which the traveller must pass on his way to the ruins of Pompeii, Pæstum, &c., and where he is sure to see the macaroni-works in full activity. The productions of these works go by the general name of "Pasta della costa." They command higher prices than any macaroni, vermicelli, &c., made elsewhere, and are exported in very considerable quantities. Extraordinary importance is attached to these articles in some remote places in the interior of the kingdom, where communication with the capital is difficult.

In respectable Neapolitan houses macaroni is on the dinner-table at least twice or thrice a week,—in many, every day. It is served up first; and on macaroni-days, generally speaking, no soup appears. The writer would rack his memory and ingenuity in vain in attempting to describe the numerous ways in which it is cooked. But these are two of the most common preparations:—The macaroni is thrown into a cauldron containing boiling water, care being taken to bend and not to break the strings more than necessary (for half the beauty of this pasta consists in the length of its fibre), and it is there left to boil until, from white, it assumes a greenish tinge, which, if properly managed, it does in about a quarter of an hour.

Verdi-verdi! green! green! is the expression of the Neapolitan's delight, when his macaroni has been properly boiled to the very second. It is then taken out of the cauldron—drained of all the water, then saturated with some concentrated meat gravy, sprinkled throughout with finely grated cheese, and served up in a large tureen, in firm unbroken strings, which are easily detached from each other.

In the second preparation the macaroni, after being boiled in the same manner (for the Neapolitans energetically maintain that there is only one proper way of boiling it), and then strained, is merely anointed with a

little butter, which is thrown in in solid pieces, and dissolved by the heat contained in the paste—to this grated cheese is added, as in the other process, and a further addition of tomata or love-apple sauce makes the dish excellent.

The reader may be assured, that cooked in either of these ways, to say nothing of the other more recondite preparations of the Italian cook, macaroni is incomparably superior to that pappy, greasy, indigestible substance, a positive disgrace to the name it bears, which is sometimes intruded on our English tables. Prepared in the Neapolitan manner, macaroni is nutritious, satisfying, light, and easy of digestion.

The strings, or sticks of the macaroni ought not to be broken into many fragments, as our English cooks, if not forewarned, are sure to practise; they are to be boiled in a capacious iron cauldron or very large saucepan, and ought not to be broken until they are served out, upon table, from the tureen to the plate, when each eater breaks them for himself with his fork. But your true-bred lazzarone, who scorns knives and forks, and puts his food into his mouth with his fingers, never breaks the strings at all until they are descending, *facilis descensus*, down the wide throat to the Avernus of his stomach. He takes up a whole handful from his wooden platter, gives it a flourish in the air, and then lets it gradually drop into his mouth. But this practice is rather picturesque than genteel or cleanly; and although I warmly recommend their manner of cooking it, I can scarcely recommend to the imitation of Englishmen the Neapolitans' mode of eating macaroni.

It has been already said that this paste forms the principal food of the poorer classes of Neapolitans. They would be too happy, however, if they could get it every day! In the course of the week they are often obliged to satisfy themselves with bread generally made of Indian corn, with a few onions or heads of garlic, and a little *minestra verde* (or greens boiled in plain water, with a small lump of lardo or hog's fat thrown in to give a flavour). Many thousands of them do not eat meat

for weeks, nay months together, but they care not for this if they can have their maccaroni, which is a substitute for every eatable.

Venders of this national commodity are established in every corner of the city of Naples. Some have shops or cellars where they prepare and retail it, but a much greater number cook it on moveable furnaces in the open air, and sell it to their hungry customers in the streets, who eat it from the dealer's bench without plates, knives, forks, spoons, or any such luxuries. In former times these maccaroni-stalls dared to stand under palaces, and lined even the Strada Toledo, and other of the principal streets, mixed up, in grotesque confusion, with the stalls of other retailers and of artisans. The concise Forsyth, who was there at the beginning of the present century, says, "A diversity of trades dispute with you the streets; you are stopped by a carpenter's bench, you are lost among shoemaker's tools, you dash among the pots of a maccaroni-stall, and you escape behind a lazzarone's night-basket." Such is still the fate of the inexperienced perambulator in some of the lower parts of the town; but of late years the characters and things enumerated have gradually been obliged to retire from the main streets and confine themselves to lanes and alleys and the outskirts of the town; in which last places, particularly on a *giorno di festa*, or holiday, the maccaroni-venders are to be found in compact groups, and (not satisfied with the temptation offered by their steaming cauldrons and well-known stalls) waving samples of their fare, at the end of long ladles, in the air, and inviting, at the top of their Stentorian voices, all passers by to stop and partake.

Some of the stationary maccaroni-shops, in the popular quarters of the town, are rather large and imposing edifices, having open porticoes in front, where the caldron is seen perpetually boiling over a charcoal fire, and a wine canteen in the rear, furnished with wooden stools and benches, and decorated with rude grotesque paintings on the walls, not quite so classical as those found in the chambers of Pompeii. It is also common to have

certain pithy, significant sentences inscribed on the walls, as “*Qui si mangia molto e spende poco*” (here one eats much and spends little); “*Domani si fa credenza, ma oggi no*” (to-morrow credit is given, but to-day not). There is, or there was in my time, a group of these shops near the Capuan gate of the city, and another near the Nola gate. The macaroni thus sold in the streets and by the way-sides is merely boiled in plain water, and more frequently eaten without any condiment whatever; sometimes, however, it is sprinkled with some grated *caccia cavallo* (a coarse white cheese made of buffalo’s milk), for which additional luxury a proportionate charge is made. The mere mention of “*quattro maccheroni con o zughillo*,” or “some macaroni with meat gravy,” will make your lazzarone’s mouth water, as *that* is a luxury which rarely comes within his means.*

For five *grani* (about twopence English) a man may thus very well stay the cravings of hunger; for ten *grani* he may have a complete feast, with scraped buffalo cheese included. With three *grani* more he can indulge in a *carafa* or bottle of common wine, or in summer time, if he prefers it, for the same sum he can procure a large glass of deliciously iced water and half of a huge melon.

It is worthy of remark that your genuine lazzarone despises to use a wine-glass or even to touch the bottle with his lips—he drinks like the New Zealander, and, frequently holding the bottle almost at arm’s length, pours a continuous stream from its neck into his mouth. This also is a feat in which they take pride, and he is

* It would be difficult to say why, but the Neapolitans, in speaking of a certain portion, or as we should say “a little macaroni,” always use the numeral word *four*, as the Scotch say “a few broth.” For other eatables they apply the number *two*,—thus, “*ho mangiato due quaglie*,” I have eaten two quails—in which sense the words must not be taken literally, for your interlocutor may have eaten a dozen quails—the phrase only means that he has eaten of the birds (or whatever else they may be) mentioned, and is not at all specific of number or quantity.

deemed a good performer who can make the wine describe a beautiful curve between the bottle and his lips, and by a sudden jerk of the hand stop its further out-pouring without spilling the liquor.

The reader is not to suppose for a moment that the people of Naples are offended at being designated as "Mangia-Maccaroni." They take pride in their national commodity, and in their national nick-name, which nick-name they freely and constantly bestow upon themselves. When I arrived at Naples—alack! 'tis thirty good years since—the second, if not the very first, question put to me by every Neapolitan with whom I made acquaintance, gentle or simple, of the rougher or of the softer sex, was—*Ebbene, Don Carlo, come vi piacciono i nostri maccaroni?* (Well! how do you like our maccaroni?) And I verily believe that my very determined constant affection for the national dish helped me on to the good will and hospitality of the people. They have a notion not only that their maccaroni is the best in the world, but that *good* maccaroni can be made in no other part of the world. One of my warmest allies—who was oftentimes my host, and who fed me surpassingly well while I was luxuriating in the sunny paths of Italian literature, and reading Tasso in his native place—the old, bluff, honest, and wholly unlettered superior of the Franciscan monastery of Sorrento, accounted for this superexcellence entirely by climate. Air, and the quality of the water used, may have something to do with it. But my old friend carried out his theory to great lengths, and made the manufacture of all manner of goods, in other countries, depend wholly and solely upon climate.

"No doubt," he would say, "you English make excellent razors, knives, gunpowder, and calico; but it is only because your native air and climate are favourable thereunto. We Neapolitans make the best maccaroni in the universal world, because our climate is conform *to that*. You may take the same machinery, the same hard grain, the same men that manufacture it there over at the 'Torre dell' Annunziata, and yet you shall find if

you set them to work at Livorno, or nearer at hand, at Rome, or Civit  Vecchia, or at Terracina, close on our frontiers, they cannot make you macaroni like our best, or such as we have had for supper to-night. And why? Because they cannot carry the climate with them."

A ROMAN HORSE-RACE.

HORSE-RACING forms one of the principal amusements of the Carneval at Rome. The common people, perhaps, do not take so much delight in any other pastime of that gay season. A Roman horse-race is, however, a very different thing from an English one. Instead of a contest in which the skill and boldness of man are as much to be admired as the speed and vigour of the animal he rides, the Roman course presents nothing but the horse which runs without any rider. It is not, however, left entirely to its own spirit and emulation; if it were, the sight would be more interesting, as showing the natural character of the animal: but it is started by noise, and goaded on by contrivances quite as artificial as the whip and spur of our jockeys.

The *barberi* (barbs—so called, perhaps, because the first horses thus employed were of the Barbary breed), when brought to the starting-post, are gaily ornamented in the front of the head, and sometimes down the neck, with plumes of peacock and other feathers. To a girth which goes round the body of each, are attached several loose straps which have at their ends small balls of lead from which issue sharp steel points,—the motion imparted to these straps by the animals' running keeps up a continual spurring on their flanks and bellies. Sheets of thin tin, stiff paper, or some other substance that will make a rustling or rattling noise when agitated, are also fastened on the horses' backs.

The last-mentioned articles serve to startle and alarm them, as if the prickly leaden balls were not excitement enough. The rearing, kicking, pawing, and snorting they make, when thus equipped, may be easily conceived. The most interesting part of the sight is when they are

just about to start. A very strong rope, secured by a machine on each side, is drawn across the street of the Corso, and up to this each man tries to bring his horse, holding it in, with all his might, by the head. The Trasteverini, and many of the peasantry in the neighbourhood of Rome, are remarkably fine, muscular men; and as they generally go to work with their arms and necks bare, and as they have frequently to maintain a struggle of downright strength with their excited horses, the action of their limbs and muscles, and other circumstances, offer a useful exhibition to the sculptor or painter. Though there are no riders, human life is more endangered in these than in our races. Sometimes the horse masters his groom, and breaks away before the Corso is cleared of people, in which and in several other cases serious accidents are almost sure to happen.

When matters are ready, a troop of dragoons set off from the other end of the Corso, and go at full gallop towards the starting-post, clearing the way: these soldiers then retire, and soon after an officer blows a trumpet from a balcony erected near to the spot whence the race is to begin. At the sound of the trumpet the strong rope stretched across the street drops, the grooms let go their hold, and off start the horses like arrows from a bow. The harder they run, the more they are pricked. Some of them have been known to be so wise as to stop, when the motion of the leaden balls, of course, would cease; but generally they run on at mad career, and *occasionally* show emulation and spite, by catching and biting at each other.

The judge of the race is no less a personage than the Governor of Rome, who stands at a window in the palace of Venice, at which building is the goal or winning-post, or, as the Romans call it, “la ripresa de’ barberi.” A little beyond this palace the street is shut in with a screen of strong canvas, through which the horses not unfrequently dash, though to their eyes it must look almost like a wall. The prize given to the master of the winning horse is merely an ornamental flag and a piece of embroidered stuff.

During the first six days of the Carneval, which at Rome is limited to eight days, matches of mares, barbs, and other horses are run alternately; but during the two last days these different classes of animals run all together, and thus naturally add to the riot, danger, and confusion of the exhibition.

Some of the barberi brought up to the rope, though small, being mostly rather under than over fourteen hands, are clean-legged, well-formed, compact, and spirited creatures, giving evidence of good blood; but, taking the Roman racers generally, we doubt, were they mounted, whether they would not be beaten in most of our pony-races.

Though betting, which gives such a perilous interest to our race-course, is by no means common, and the prize contended for so little worth, nothing can exceed the eagerness of the excitable Italians on these occasions. During the heat, the spectators honour with deafening "bravoes" the horse that runs well, and hiss and hoot with almost equal noise all such as lag behind.

The Maltese have another very curious method of horse-racing. The horses are indeed mounted, but they are not furnished with saddle, bridle, or any things of the sort; the riders sit on the bare back, and have no reins or any thing else in their hands except a small pointed instrument, not unlike a cobbler's awl, with which they prick on their steeds.

These races are held on a grand festival in the month of June, near Città Vecchia in the interior of the island. The horses are generally barbs, imported from the neighbouring coast of Africa,—small, good tempered, and certainly not swift. To these characteristics of the animals, which facilitate such a mode of equitation, we must add the important circumstance, that where the run or the great effort is made they go up hill.

With an animal of anything like the velocity and springy action of an English race-horse, it would be impossible to do without what the author of an excellent article on the "Turf," in No. xcviii. of the 'Quarterly Review,' calls "the fulcrum of the stirrups;" and it

would only be a *little* less impossible to stop him without bit or bridle. Indeed, even with such steeds as some of them have, we fancy, if the Maltese would reverse the case, and make the grand run down hill, instead of up, that not many of them would keep their seats. It would excite the derision of the Buckles and the Chisneys, and other heroes of our turf, to see a naked-legged, naked-armed, red-sashed, slovenly set of fellows, rolling about on their ponies like so many Bacchuses on wine-barrels, flourishing their awls, and bawling out in the most indecorous manner; but, notwithstanding this, the Maltese races certainly offer a novel and amusing scene to the stranger.

ITALIAN LETTER-WRITERS.

SOME years ago it was no uncommon thing, particularly in those parts of London near the river, as Wapping and Shadwell, to see stuck in the window of a shop or in front of a stall, such inscriptions as "Letters written here," "Letters written to all parts of the world," "A large assortment of letters on all sorts of subjects to be found within," &c. &c.

These inscriptions, however, have been gradually disappearing with the spread of education among the people. No doubt there are still many individuals in London who cannot write, and that much remains to be done in this important branch of popular instruction; but it is equally certain that at the present day there are few families, even among the poorest, without some member of it, or without some friend or neighbour, that is qualified to carry on its limited correspondence;—and thus the occupation of a general public letter-writer is going, and is almost gone, from among us in London.

Far different is it at Rome, and still more so at Naples. In both these cities a body of men not inconsiderable in number, and who have no other occupation whatever, gain their bread by writing letters for the poor and uneducated classes. These humble yet important functionaries—for in no condition of society can the faculty of carrying on a correspondence of affection or of business by means of letters be considered otherwise than important—do not, generally speaking, occupy either shop or stall, but ply their labours in the open air. Their portable establishment, or stock in trade, consists of an old rickety table, with sometimes a desk upon it, two low stools (one for the writer, the other for the cus-

tomers), a few sheets of paper, some pens, a penknife made like a razor and almost as big, a still more oddly shaped inkhorn and a pair of spectacles, either to aid their sight or to give a grave look. Thus furnished they sit through the day, generally near to the post-office, either despatching business or waiting for it. The variety of subjects they have to discuss is of course almost infinite; but as people are never more inclined to write than when they are in love, and as the poor Italians are a very loving and (be it said to their honour, and the shame of their rich and noble countrymen) a very virtuous people, these scribes have, perhaps, love-letters to write more frequently than any other kind of epistle.

The picture of the "Letter-writer," painted at Rome by Mr. J. P. Davis, which is well known by means of repeated engravings, is a truthful representation of an interesting, a touching, though common Roman scene. The grave, dignified, and sagacious-looking old man is engaged on that tender subject, which contrasts singularly with his years, his long white beard, and wrinkled countenance. The fair *contadina*,* kneeling by the side of his table, has placed upon it an open letter, in the corner of which we read the endearing words "*anima mia*," or "my soul," and it is doubtless to this she is dictating an answer, counting the periods, in true Italian fashion, on her fingers, while the venerable scribe is mending his pen and catching his theme previously to beginning his flourish. Save his very long beard, the scribe is no invention of the painter's, but a well-known character at Rome, where he is probably still to be found, as he used to be a few years since, pursuing his vocation in fair weather and in foul—acting as the organ of the poor and the lowly, with an enviable indifference to all the great world around him. Youthful faces bearing the same tender earnestness of expression and (particularly at Rome) the same degree of poetical beauty—*contadine* engaged in precisely the same manner—must have struck the eye of every traveller who has not confined his

* Country girl or peasant.

attention to operas, conversazioni, and picture-galleries, but extended it to what passes in the humbler streets and by-places occupied by the people—where, as Dr. Johnson observed long ago, national character best displays itself.

To all future travellers of this kind, or investigators of popular manners and feelings, we would recommend the stalls of the public letter-writers at Naples, where, owing to the people being still less educated than in the States of the Pope, and the population being more than double that of Rome, they abound much more than in the “eternal city.” In a *vico*, or lane, by the side of the post-office of Naples, they generally “plant the desk,” as they are there at hand not only to write answers, but to read the letters as they arrive—for the accomplishment of reading is almost as rare as that of writing among the poor Neapolitans. There, close to the iron-grated windows of the post-office through which the letters are delivered, the patient *scrivani* sit from eight o’clock in the morning till the dusk of evening. In the lane there is an archway, some few yards in length, formed by a building that permits a passage beneath; and here part of them draw their tables to be protected from the scorching rays of the sun in summer, and, partially, from the cold in winter. Those who cannot avail themselves of this shelter fit out a piece of sail-cloth or canvas above their tables when the day is very hot. In winter, and there are many cold wintry days even at Naples, they wrap themselves in rough old *tabarri* or cloaks, and furnish themselves each with a little earthen pot of ignited charcoal, the whole fuel of which might very well be contained in a soup-ladle.

As their customers are, of course, confined to the poorest classes—to soldiers and sailors, their wives or sweethearts—to sheep-drivers from Apulia or buffalo-herds from Calabria—to servant-maids, nurses, and such sort of people—their calling, it will naturally be supposed, is not a very lucrative one. For a letter of ordinary length their charge is about five Neapolitan *grani*, or twopence English; but this is proportionably in-

creased to ten or even to fifteen *grani*; while, for petitions to the king or government, which they also write, and which the poor, sanguine Neapolitans are fond of sending in, though it does not appear they get much by the practice, they charge as much as two or three *carlini* (three *carlini* making the important sum of one shilling English!). Yet with these trifling gains the scrivani contrive to live, and, for the most part, to keep a family. They eat their maccheroni when they have had a good day's work; and now and then drive about in a corribolo or a calesso on holidays.

Above all the people in Europe the common Neapolitans may be described as being a light-hearted, noisy, farcical people. The scenes of most frequent occurrence at the stands of the letter-writers, where all bawl out their private affairs aloud, and show the greatest excitement about the smallest trifles, are scenes, to the spectator, of downright farce and fun; but occasionally, and not unfrequently, these are mingled with exhibitions of thrilling passion and pathos. The poor old father or the mother—the wife or the sister—of some sailor or soldier, or poor man, long absent, will come running to the scrivano with a letter just handed through the bars of the office, impatient, breathless, yet afraid to hear him read its contents; or, at other times, some such persons will come in the agonies of grief, displayed with all the vivacity of Italian expression of countenance and gesticulation, to avail themselves of the letter-writer's pen in communicating some fatal intelligence. These things combined—the humour and farce with the occasional tragedy of humble life—render the resort of the scrivani a valuable study to the artist, to the poet, and to him who would investigate the workings of the human mind under various circumstances and impressions, and without restraint or disguise.

Many a time, as the sun was setting behind the volcanic island of Ischia, as the drums were beating the rappel on the stark walls of the castle, close at hand (which is still called the *new*, though it was built by the Emperor Charles V.), as the people, with loud-tongued

mirth, were hurrying to the Molo to listen to Punch or the Canta-Storia, and as the Procaccie, or government mails, were arriving from the provinces, have I stood under that archway by the post-office, studying the character of a people whom, from my very long living among them, I may, without any conceit, pretend to know better than our tourists who have written big volumes about them.

SNOW-HARVEST.

IN England, and other countries of the north, ices are rarely used, and are considered a luxury of the rich ; but in the hot climates of the south, and at Naples and in Sicily particularly, they are classed, during the summer season, among the absolute necessities of life, and are consumed, in some shape or other, by all classes down to the poorest of the land. We believe there is no traveller that ever passed the warm season in those countries, but will agree in estimating them and iced water as the greatest of physical blessings. The wine of the country, though kept in the coolest cellars, and the water, though drawn from the deepest well or most gelid source, become, on the shortest exposure to the atmosphere, so tepid and mawkish, that it is scarcely possible to drink them, and, if drunk, they give no refreshment. During the burning, exhausting heats of June, July, and August, even the Neapolitan lazzarone will turn away loathing (*se non c' è neve*) if there is no snow to cool his draught. But give him a handful of pure sparkling congealed snow to dissolve in his glass, and the poorest wine of a penny a bottle, or plain water, becomes nectar—he drinks joyfully, and is indeed “ powerfully refreshed.”

We have spoken of “ ices ” and “ iced water,” because such are the names (in our own case derived from the true material employed, which is ice) in use in England. But in the south of Italy, it is not ice but snow that is employed in all cases. The quantity that is consumed annually, particularly when the summer proves long and unusually hot, is prodigious. In the low country, even in their coldest winters, snow never lies upon the ground ; but in the Apennines that run all through the peninsula

they have an exhaustless magazine of the precious substance. A few of the loftiest mountains of that great chain,—as *Il gran Sasso d' Italia*, or the Great Rock of Italy, and *Monte Majello* (both in the *Abruzzi*)—have snow on their summits all the year round, and even glaciers in some of their deep crevices; but, generally speaking, the snow disappears from the ridges of the *Apennines* towards the end of May, and were not art and precaution employed it could not be made available to man at the season he most wants it. The *Neapolitans*, therefore, dig deep wells or caverns high up the mountain's sides, or sometimes make use of natural caves among the rocks. Into these, at the proper season, when they can procure it in broad, thick, purely white layers, they throw the snow to be preserved. The snow is well pressed together, and, when the chasm is full, or nearly so, they throw in a quantity of straw, dried leaves, and branches of trees to keep the external air from the snow, and then shut up the mouth of the well or cavern, which is sometimes, though not always, enclosed by a small, rude stone building. These snow-caves are mostly on the northern face of the mountain. By paying proper attention to their exposition and the points of the compass,—by taking advantage of thick trees that, in summer, afford a cool, dense shade, or of a deep, narrow rift in the rocks where the sun never penetrates,—these depôts may be safely placed as low down the mountain as the snow falls and lies. This is an advantage of no mean value, as the labour and expense of carriage are reduced, the material being nearer market and more easily accessible. When the snow does fall in any quantity on the lower and inhabited ridges of the mountains it gives occasion to great joy and festivity among the peasants, who troop from all parts to collect it and carry it off to a safe snow-cave. I once witnessed a curious and enlivening scene of the sort. I was travelling from *Naples* towards *Apulia*, and was crossing the first or lower ridge of the *Apennines*, between the towns of *Il Cardinale*, and *Monte Forte*, and *Avellino*, when, suddenly, a sharp snow-storm came on, which soon covered

the ground with a thick white mantle. As soon as the flakes began to fall quickly and compactly, all the country people set up a joyful shout, and presently men, women, and children all ran out with rakes, shovels, baskets, hand-barrows, rush-mats, and every thing available that they could seize at the moment, to collect the falling treasure. The Israelites in the desert could hardly have shown more joyous feelings at the fall of their manna. They sang—they shouted—they laughed—they kept up a constant fire of jokes, not forgetting, however, to gather in the snow all the while. There was none of that pleasant sport which we call snow-balling—the material and their time, on such an occasion, were too precious to be lost or wasted. Balls, to be sure, were made, and of an enormous size; but these the children carefully rolled along the mountain's side to throw into the snow-caves. They were all evidently foretasting the refreshment and delight to be procured from this gift of winter during the scorching heats of summer and the suffocating airs of the sirocco; not overlooking, in all probability, the gains to be derived from selling their overstock of snow to their neighbours in the hot thirsty plain of the Terra di Lavoro. As we went by, the groups of busy peasants, men and boys, shouted out to us "*Ecco, Signori, una bella raccolta! questa è una bella raccolta!*" (Here, Sirs, is a fine harvest! this is a fine harvest!)

To supply the city of Naples, one of the largest capitals of Europe, which has a population of 450,000 souls—all snow-consumers—a very extensive mountain-range is put into requisition. From the Apennines, and from all the nearer branches and ramifications of those mountains, snow, during the summer months, is constantly being brought into the city by land and by sea—always, however, by sea when practicable, as, by that mode of conveyance, it is kept cleaner, loses less by melting, and costs less for carriage. Hundreds of men and boys are employed exclusively on this business.

A mountain that contributes very materially to the supply of the capital is Monte Sant' Angelo, the loftiest

point of the bold promontory that separates the Bay of Naples from the Bay of Salerno. This mountain, which towers majestically behind the town and sea-port of Castellamare, near the end of the Neapolitan bay is only about twelve miles from Naples itself. On account of the short distance, and the advantage of an easy water-carriage, the snow is there harvested with great industry and care, and Monte Sant' Angelo is well provided with such caves and chasms as we have described. Some of these contain singly an immense heap of snow, but prodigious as the quantity may be, it rapidly disappears before the labours of the workmen, who, with iron-spiked poles, and shovels, dig into it, and break it up much after the fashion of men working in salt-mines. These labours, for a very obvious reason, when, in the day-time, Fahrenheit's thermometer often marks 90° or 100° in the sun, are nearly all performed during the cool of the evening and night. Long strings of mules, each like a little caravan, ascend the mountain to the snow-caves. There they are loaded with the snow broken into large lumps, and secured from the external atmosphere as well as may be, and then, with all the speed that can be managed with heavy burdens, and on steep, precipitous, and, in parts, very dangerous roads, they descend by Quisisana* to Castellamare and the wharfs, where large, roomy boats are in readiness to receive their loads. As soon as the very perishable cargo of one of these boats is completed, and covered over with straw, dry leaves, and tarpauling, it pushes off direct for Naples. The time of their departure is from eleven or twelve o'clock at night to one or two in the morning. They are all furnished with a mast and sails, which may be useful to them on their return; but as there is seldom a breath of wind on a summer's night in this bay, they are of little use in going to Naples, and the sailors are

* A beautiful royal villa, with a small village near it, on the mountain's side above Castellamare, is so called. The Italian compound, "Qui si sana," being rendered literally, is in English "Here one recovers health."

obliged to pull the boats with oars and long sweeps. This labour, from the clumsy, bad construction of the vessels, and the dead weight thrown into them, is excessively severe, particularly when they are delayed in starting, and threatened with the heat of the rising sun before they can reach the port of Naples. Fire ought to be brought to the aid of snow. A small steam-boat might tow over a line of these vessels without any uncertainty as to time. During the summer nights, at the town of Castellamare, the trampling of the mules from the mountain, the cries and songs of the muleteers, the putting off of the snow-boats, and the shouts of the mariners, the roll of whose heavy oars are heard far across the bay, are scarcely ever interrupted for five minutes at a time.

When the snow-boats arrive in the port of Naples, they are quickly unloaded by a number of *facchini*, or porters, regularly appointed to that service. These fellows, who are very active and very strong, though their principal food is bread, olives, garlic, and other vegetables, with now and then a good dish of *maccaroni*, run with their loads of snow from the water-side to a large, cool building erected on purpose to receive it. This building, which is called "*La Dogana della Neve*," or the Snow Custom-house, is situated a little in the rear of the port, at the distance of a few hundred yards from the great Neapolitan custom-house. To this general depôt the retail dealers come to furnish themselves from all parts of the vast town; and there is scarcely a street in Naples, however miserable and remote it may be, but has its snow-shop. By an old law of the country, these shops are never allowed to be shut up during the hot weather, either by night or by day; or, if the owner closes the door or absents himself, he must leave some one in the shop ready to serve should snow be called for. A similar regulation, only extending all the year through, applies to apothecaries' shops. With respect to the venders of physic, the old law is pretty well let go to sleep, but the popular want and habit keep it awake in regard to the snow-dealers. It must be remarked, how-

ever, that snow itself is both a medicine and a medication ; it is taken internally, alone, or mixed with syrups and drugs, and it is used in outward topical applications for head-aches, sprains, and an almost infinite variety of cases. The quantity consumed in this way is very great. Snow, indeed, may be called the best physician and the best surgeon of the poor Neapolitans, who do not often consult any other.

In Naples, the snow-trade, like the trade of salt, tobacco, playing-cards, &c., all over the kingdom, was, from very old times, a government monopoly. The king was accustomed to farm it to a company, who paid so many thousand ducats a year for the privilege, and who were moreover bound to sell the snow at a fixed unvarying price, and severely fined whenever they left the city unprovided with a quantity sufficient for the demand. The government, having committed the folly of interfering with this branch of trade, at least showed wisdom in this severity, for few things could be more likely to excite the people to revolt than a dearth of snow in the dog-days. The *Dogana della Neve* is farmed, and produces a considerable revenue.

Of the mountains of snow brought daily into Naples, some goes to private families, who use it at their meals, some to the coffee-houses and sorbettieri, where it is made up in sherbet, lemonade, ices, &c., &c., and a large quantity to itinerant venders of inferior *gelati*, and to stationary *acquaio*li, or water-sellers, who cool with it the plain beverage they sell to passengers at the corner of almost every street. In domestic usage, it not merely does its duty in the wine-cooler, but it is served up at table in an open vessel, out of which each person helps himself to a piece as he prepares to drink his wine,—which, we must remark, is always drunk from tumblers. There is a knack of filling up the mouth of the tumbler with a piece of snow and then pouring the wine gently upon it, letting it filter through the snow into the glass. That great desideratum, an icy-cold draught, is thus procured, and the effect to the eye is pleasing enough, particularly when “*Capri Rosso*,” or any other ruby-

coloured wine, is thrown upon the sparkling frozen snow.

The coffee-houses, which are very numerous, nearly all sell lemonade and ices during summer. From eight o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon the trade is mostly confined to sherbet and lemonade; but at the evening hour they begin a vigorous manufacture of gelati, which, in a well-frequented shop, knows no rest or cessation until after midnight. The gentry stop at the doors of these shops, and take the ices in their carriages, or sometimes go into the shop, the entire fronts of which are thrown open to the street. On a former occasion I have highly praised the manufacture of maccaroni, and I must say here that the Neapolitans and the Sicilians are the best makers of ices in the world. The Parisian artists in that line are not to be compared with them, while our English ones are generally bad. The variety in the names and qualities of their gelati is almost endless. To make good ices good sugar is indispensable, and it was a sore affliction for these manufacturers, during some part of the existence of Bonaparte's continental system, to be obliged to use honey, or sugar made by French chemists from carrots and beet-roots, instead of the West Indian sugars we were wont to sell them. A few years ago there was a great sorbettiero living at the top of the Strada Toledo;—he was an old man who had witnessed sundry revolutions and innumerable political changes, but he only cared for two—the Milan and Berlin decrees that shut out sugar and made bad ices, and the abrogation of the said decrees, through the fall of Napoleon, which threw trade open and brought about good ices.

While these shops supply the gentry, the itinerant venders deal with the poorer classes. Every summer evening, on the long Mole, by the port, and in other places much frequented by the people, these eloquent and noisy traders ply their business. Their wares, of course, are not so good, but then they are much cheaper,—and are they not always cold? For three, four, or five grains, the sailor, the fisherman, the thirsty cales-

siero, or other labouring man, can obtain that *summum bonum*—a long mouthful of something cold and sweet. On the evenings of church festivals and holidays the trade carried on in this way is very extensive indeed, and, on such occasions, the flying ice-sellers are found in all the busy suburbs and outlets of the town, maintaining a deafening rivalry with the venders of water-melons and other luxuries. Instead of the invitations used at our playhouses and fairs to drink ginger-beer, soda-water, bottled ale, or brown stout, these loud-tongued venders keep shouting “*Sorbetti! Sorbetti stupendi! Acqua nevata, fridda! fridda come la neve in c’uoppo la montagna! Chi vuol bere? Chi vuol bere?*”—which Neapolitan *patois*, being translated into our vernacular, signifieth, “Sherbets! stupendous sherbets! Iced water, cold! cold as the snow on the mountain top! Who wants to drink? Who wants to drink?” The quantity which is drunk during a summer fair or festa, especially by the Tarantella dancers, is indeed stupendous! The merits of a festa are in good part judged of by the copiousness of the supply. “Have you had a good festa at the Madonna dell’Arco, this time?” asks a stay-at-home. “Oh! yes; there was a profusion of sorbets, and a magnificent supply of iced water!”—replies his gossip.

But the steadiest, the least luxurious, and the most generally useful consumption of snow is perhaps that made by the stationary *acquaio*li, or water-sellers. The shop, or trade-establishment of one of this class of dealers, is a singular and not unpicturesque object. There is a high table or bench, having, on either side, two perpendicular wooden columns, between which (generally on both sides) is suspended a water-barrel that swings to and fro on an iron axis. These columns, or pillars, are crowned by an architrave, and a fantastically-shaped pediment finishes the out-door wooden shop, which may be about five feet long, four broad, and twelve high, to the top of the pediment. It is generally placed at the corner of a street, and always against the wall, leaving just space enough for the dealer to stand

between the wall and his bench. The whole of the construction, were it not so bedizened and furnished out, would not look unlike a pulpit: but as it is, it may more correctly be compared to a Chinese moveable Joss temple. It is painted all over with the gaudiest colours, is frequently rudely carved and gilded, and decorated with flags and peacocks' feathers, while from pediment and column hang drinking-glasses of all sizes and fashions; and other glasses, mixed with bottles, flasks, oranges, and lemons, "in most admired disorder," bestrew the table or bench. In the rear of this medley, and generally bolt upright against the wall, and elevated on a stool, stands the officiating minister of the temple, with a white or a red nightcap on his head, a red sash round his loins, his throat, chest, and arms entirely bare, and in his right hand an enormous pair of iron squeezers, or pincers, big enough and strong enough to draw the teeth of a mammoth, but which he only uses to express the juice from his oranges and lemons into the glasses of thirsty passengers.

The swinging water-barrels are closed at one end with thick cork, in which there is a large bung-hole for the admission of pieces of snow, and a small aperture for the emission of the cooled water. When the snow is thrown in, the man agitates the barrel until it is partially dissolved in the water; he also gives a shake or two every time he draws off a glass for a customer. A plain glass of water, but deliciously cold, with the vapour or refrigerated air standing on the outside of the glass like dew, only costs about half a farthing;—for twice that sum, a squeezed lemon or orange, or some drops of sambuco, are added. This sambuco is a curious, bluish, milky-looking liquor, distilled from the flowers of the elder-tree, of a peculiar but not unpleasant taste when mixed with iced water. A very great quantity of it is consumed in this way. The acquaïola, moreover, is always furnished with certain double-sized glasses of portentous dimensions, for which double price is charged. Rum, brandy, and all ardent spirits are utter strangers to the sanctity of the water-drinking shrine. It surprises

some strangers to see that the Neapolitans, at the hottest time of the day, and when they are in a state of the most profuse perspiration from the effects of work or of walking in the broiling sun, will stop before one of these temples and take off a large glassful of the coldest water at a draught, and with impunity. But this they all do daily, and in the hottest weather several times in the course of the day. I believe also that few foreigners live long at Naples without doing precisely the same thing, and with just the same impunity. I never found, in my own person, any ill consequence from the practice, though many were the double-tumblers I quaffed in the hottest of the dog-days, and when I was heated in the extreme by walking or riding. In the great thoroughfares of the town these *acquaioi* carry on an immense deal of business, their stands, at certain hours of the day, being constantly surrounded by impatient customers, who empty the glasses more quickly than the dealers can fill them.

Nearly all that we have said here about Naples may be applied to Sicily. The great snow-storehouse of Sicily is Mount *Ætna*, and the English and the natives at Malta also derive their supplies from the caverns and summits of that volcano.

But for this constant supply from the lofty Sicilian volcano—called by poetical Sicilians “the Arch-priest of Mountains” because its shoulders are always covered with a white stole—it would be but comfortless living in Malta during the hot months.

I have said that a dearth of snow in the dog-days would be very likely to produce a popular revolt at Naples. I once knew a scarcity lead very nigh to a sentence of interdict or excommunication. This was not in the capital, but in a seaport town at one end of the Neapolitan kingdom. My old friend Monsignore —, bishop of —, though somewhat self-willed and choleric, was a kind-hearted, open-handed, most hospitable man;—almost the last specimen extant of the high-born, gallant, thoroughly polite, jovial, and ease-loving Neapolitan prelates of the preceding century. Though not far

from the "threescore years and ten," he had the clearest, rubiest complexion I ever beheld. He made his own wine on his own church-lands; and excellent wine it was, though over-generous and heady, when its strength was not allayed by congealed snow from the mountains of Calabria, the storehouse nearest to his diocese. For his "giorno onomastico," or Saint's-day, Monsignore had invited a large yet select company to dinner, and not a few of his guests had had to travel a long way, across a country without shade or trees (save here and there an olive-grove) in one of the most broiling days of August. A Neapolitan dinner, in summer time, is nought without an abundance of ices to usher in the dessert. The good bishop's *ripostiere*, or confectioner, had made his ices; but, not having paid sufficient attention to the state of the snow-market, or to the supply on hand in the small town of ———, he found, when he called for *Neve, più neve*, to cool the wine, and serve up at table for mixture, that there was none, absolutely none, to be procured. When the astounding intelligence was announced, just as dinner was ready, the ruby prelate turned pale, and so did many of his parched guests. "*Non c'è neve! Come, come?*"—"No snow! How, how is this?" It was thus:—the snow-boats had not arrived with their customary freights from the opposite side of the Gulf of Tarentum, and the Chief of the Customs, whose Christian name was the same as the bishop's, and who, consequently, had the same saint to honour, had invited company to dinner, and had swept off the last rotolo of snow in the magazine of ———. Recovering from his first consternation, Monsignore said—"Take two jumps* across the square, to the master of the customs, and, saluting him in my name, tell him the straits I am in! Tell him I have company—company of distinction—and am short of snow. Request of him that he spare

* *Fare due zumpi*, or make two jumps, is one of the commonest of Neapolitan idioms; meaning *make haste*. Does their *zumpo* come from our *jump*, or our *jump* from their *zumpo*? They have also the verb *zumpare*.

us some from his stock. The good deed shall be remembered by his bishop!" The servant soon returned with a very churlish answer from the Chief of the Customs:—he had company of his own—he could spare none of his snow—nay, he would not. "The misbelieving dog, the Pagan, Frenchman, Jacobin!" shouted the bishop. "I will forth and see whether he shall have snow, and I and mine honoured guests none! I will go lay an interdict upon him, I will excommunicate him in the public place!" And, in much shorter time than would have been anticipated from his age and rotundity of person, the choleric prelate was out in the piazza or square, mounted on a bench, explaining to the people the atrociousness, selfishness, and disrespect of the Chief of the Customs, and pronouncing Anathema Maranatha upon him. Now, the bishop was not more liked by the common people of ——— than the chief of the customs was disliked by them. The lay official had been employed by the French, under King Joseph Bonaparte and King Joachim Murat; he was believed to be no very devout Catholic in his heart; and, although he had grown rich by conniving with great smugglers, he had often been very rigorous towards little ones. With these feelings the people were no sooner made aware of the cause of their prelate's ire, than they rushed across the square, and into the house of the Chief of the Customs, and then back to the bishop's palazzo, with, not a part, but the whole of the snow which the publican and sinner had appropriated to himself. And so, Monsignore suspended his excommunication and went to his good dinner, and he and his guests cooled their wine and their water with snow, and the Chief of the Customs and his company did penance upon no snow. The layman talked of law, and of writing to the secretary of state about this mob-invasion of his pantry; but he was too cunning a man to take any proceedings where a bishop was concerned who was so very popular, and who had powerful friends and relatives at court.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

IN Catholic countries Easter relieves people from the long fasting of Lent, and is for that and many other reasons, at some of which I shall hint, an especially gay and genial season. The awful solemnities of the *Settimana Santa*, or holy week, during which the severities of penance are increased, and which immediately precedes Easter Sunday, give the charm of contrast to the festival in a degree unknown in Protestant countries, where (to the mass of people) all times and seasons are pretty equal, except so far as they are affected by heat or cold, clouds, rain, sunshine, or other changes of weather. I do not intend to describe the holy week's solemnities, which are seen in their greatest and truly imposing perfection at Rome; nor have I for the present any wish of telling how Easter is kept among the wealthier classes, and in the different parts of Italy, where the mode of the observances varies in a slight measure. My present recollections bear wholly upon the kingdom of Naples, and relate chiefly to the body of the people and to humble individuals, who, as scrupulous observers of the fasts of the church, enjoy its feasts and holidays with greater zest than the upper classes, whose Catholicism, generally speaking, is much less strict.

From the hour of noon of the Thursday of the holy week, no wheeled carriages of any kind are allowed to be used in the cities and towns. All conditions of people, up to the court and king, must walk humbly on foot. The troops in patrol, and the sentinels at their posts, all carry their arms reversed. The numerous church bells are all silenced, the market-places deserted, the shops shut up, and all possible external means

adopted that may denote a season of solemn silence, penitence, and humiliation. A Sunday at Naples is the noisiest of all days, but on the Holy Thursday and Good Friday I have seen that populous city as still as a Scotch town on the Sabbath. In all the provincial towns, as well as in the capital, some of the principal churches are converted into sad and sometimes striking scenes. The light of day is excluded, and in the darkest recess or niche of the church there is the representation of a sepulchre, with the figure of our Saviour lying in it. All round the sepulchre the walls are hung with black cloth, while a few large wax torches throw a concentrated light within the body of the tomb, leaving all the rest of the church in a semi-obscurity, doubtful and vapoury, which is increased by the bluish-grey smoke of the incense that is almost continually burning. If Protestant notions are opposed to such scenic representations, they ought to take no offence at the exquisite, solemn, and almost Divine music that is frequently performed on these occasions in the churches. The 'Stabat Mater dolorosa' of a Cimarosa, a Pergolesi, or a Paisiello, cannot be listened to by any man who has a soul within him, without profound and religious emotion; and to the deep impression made by such music on the poorest, least enlightened, and coarsest of the people, I have been witness a hundred times.

These churches are thrown open on the afternoon of Holy Thursday; and, until a late hour of the evening, are visited in succession by people of all ranks, who are blended together without distinction, and who all go humbly on foot—a religious commemoration producing for a time an almost perfect semblance of equality. The court, the nobility, the gentry, and now indeed the mass of the citizens of Naples, dress in deep black on this occasion, and the peasantry, who flock into the city in all directions, wear their best clothes. The Strada Toledo, or principal street, though quite as much crowded as I shall presently describe it to be on a Carneval day, presents as different an aspect as can well be imagined. Not a single wheel rolls over its rattling lava pavement—not a laugh, scarcely a voice is heard. All is hushed,

except here and there, where the sounds of sacred music float through the open doors of a church, or when at nightfall the king and court walk back to the palace preceded by a crash of music.

On the following day (Good Friday) the ceremonies are continued with some additions, and on Saturday at noon the church bells are set again in motion. Coaches, gigs, carts, begin again to dash and roll through the streets, the shops are thrown open, the markets become crowded. Naples is the same noisy place as usual, the garments of mourning disappear, and whichever way you turn you see wholesale preparations for Easter feasting and jollity. The purveyors of all kinds of provisions have their hands full of business, but the butchers' and bakers' shops present the most curious scenes. In the former, lambs and young kids, sheep, and quartered bullocks, partially covered over with flowers and tinsel, or gilding, such as we find on our gingerbread, are displayed with much effect; whilst in the bakers' shops, heaps of a particular kind of bread, only used at this season, are piled up in full view of the public. The shops where eggs are sold in large quantities are also curious to behold, for all the egg-shells, instead of being white, are dyed red, by being dipped in a decoction, which, I believe, is generally made of log-wood; and hence arose the amusing mistake of a hurried tourist, who happening to be a day or two at Naples during Easter-week, made "a brief in his note-book," that, contrary to the general habit of their species, all the Neapolitan hens laid red eggs.

I believe at one time this practice of dyeing eggs at Easter was common to all Catholic countries. In some districts in the north of England the custom of presenting the "Pasch-egg," which is an egg dyed or stained on the shell, to young people, at Easter-time, still obtains.

The Paschal, or Easter-bread (called in the patois of the country *cassatielli*), used by the Neapolitans, is made in the form of a hollow circle, or ring, indented and roughened on the top and the outer sides, and held by them

to be a pretty correct imitation, both in form and size, of the crown of thorns worn by our Saviour at his crucifixion. This rough circle is studded here and there with eggs, which are sunk in the dough with their shells on, and so baked in the oven with the bread. I never saw the preparation, or the materials mixed with the dough; but these *cassatielli* are beautifully white, rather sweet, and altogether very delicious bread.

There is also a curious dish used at this season, and meant to imitate the crown of thorns, at least in shape; this consists of a number of rings or hollow circles, about three inches in diameter, made of a thick kind of batter, and fried over a quick fire. These symbolical circles are called *zeppoli*. If I remember right, they make their appearance, like our pancakes, on Shrove Tuesday, and are eaten through all the Quaresima, or Lent; but they reappear among the good things of Pasqua, or Easter. But nearly everything eaten at this season, from the Paschal lamb to the household bread, has some reference to the mysteries of our religion. With what is considered an appropriate change of dishes, forms, and materials, the same thing occurs at Christmas, Whitsuntide, and the other high festivals of the Church. The Neapolitan people have tenaciously retained all these old customs, which have gradually been passing away in most of the other countries of Europe. They have still a running margin to their church rubric, in which they mark the dishes *d'obbligo*, or appropriate to each particular season; and thus, in the course of a year, they may be said to eat through a course of ecclesiastical chronology and belief. Even the very poorest make an effort to keep up these old usages, and often pinch their bellies for a week, in order to be able to feast on the proper ingredients at the next festival. The people of the capital—the Napolitani and mangia-maccaroni par excellence—who are rather notorious for their improvidence, occasionally make too great sacrifices on this head. I have known a fellow sell his only jacket to buy zeppoli and spezzato at Easter: and have heard of another who took the bed from under him that he might

feast upon *capitoni*, or fat eels,* at Christmas; nor are such instances by any means rare.

Although Naples contains a population of 450,000, I have often wondered, on the Saturday, how the mountains of provisions and good things exposed in the market-places, and in the shops all over the city, could possibly be consumed; but the feasting of Easter Sunday alone pretty generally disposes of all that, and the festivity is kept up, *con brio*, the Monday and Tuesday following. On Easter Monday the city of Naples is crowded, bustling, and noisy in the extreme. The country-people in the neighbourhood—men, women, and children, flock into town, and indulge in their favourite propensity of driving about like mad in hack coaches, calessi, corriboli, or any kind of vehicle that will run upon wheels. They refresh themselves (and sometimes powerfully) at the *taverne*, or public-houses, in the suburbs; but I should not say that drunkenness is *frequent* among them even on Easter Monday.

But the pleasantest of my recollections are connected with an Easter I once spent in company with an English friend, far away from the crowd and uproar of Naples, and chiefly among the peasantry. At this season of the year the weather is most balmy and delicious in the south of Italy, and not too warm for pedestrian excursions, as it soon afterwards becomes. On the Wednesday of the holy week, in the good year 1822, we turned our backs on the capital, with the intention of walking to the ruins of Pæstum. We passed the whole of that afternoon among the streets of the disinterred city of Pompeii, which was more silent than ever, for there were no visitors, and the labourers employed in the excavations had all given over work, and gone to their homes to keep holiday. On the following evening, as we were walking through the beautiful mountain-pass which leads from the town of La Cava to Salerno, we fell in with many little groups or companies of peasants, who all had their

* These eels are always eaten on Christmas Eve, as we eat plum-pudding and roast-beef on Christmas-day.

conical hats ornamented with olive twigs, and olive branches twined round their spades, and hoes, and other implements they were carrying on their shoulders. They had been out to work on the other side of the mountains, and were now returning to their own homes, to spend their Easter holidays with their families and friends. Some of them had almost reached their journey's end, and leaving the high road, sloped across the hills to certain little villages above the town of Amalfi, on the Gulf of Salerno; but others had still far to go, to the Pæstan plain, Ebóli, the Cilento, and other districts. They all went happily along, singing from time to time, and evidently enjoying the prospect of a new meeting with their families, and a few days of festivity. As we left them, or as they left us, they wished us "*La buona Pasqua*," or Good Easter, a compliment omitted by very few persons we met. On drawing near to the town of Salerno, which is most pleasantly situated on the edge of the bay, the odour of incense which issued from it was so strong as to drown the scent of the wild myrtles and flowers that grew luxuriantly on one side of us, and of the marine plants and of the sea that lay on the other.

In the streets of the town the whole population seemed abroad, and, with the peasants, were walking from church to church to visit the sepulchres. We spent that night and the whole of the next day (Good Friday) at Salerno, and during that time there was a sort of holy quietness and repose in the place—an appearance of peace and good-will among all men, that affected us in no slight degree. Part of our happy sensations may have arisen from the beauty of the surrounding scenery, the deliciousness of the atmosphere, and the state of our own minds soothed by healthful exercise; but I am quite sure that a good portion of the pleasure was nothing but a reflex of the delight of the people we saw around us.

We continued our journey on Saturday morning, and reached the humble inn of the small town of Eboli in the afternoon. As we were resting awhile upon our beds before dinner, a priest came in and sprinkled holy

water in the chamber, and then passed on to bless the other rooms of the house. This ceremony is performed in most houses just before Easter, and the country-people will on no account dispense with it, as they hold the annual benediction efficacious in keeping sin and sorrow, evil spirits, and ill luck, out of doors. We sat down to our quiet meal as the church bells, in their usual manner, were tolling the "Ave Maria," and our main dish was, not a paschal lamb, but a kid, which, when *very* young, is, in my opinion, as good or even a better dish. The number of kids consumed at Easter, particularly in the pastoral districts, is very great.

On the next day, which was Easter Sunday, we walked over the Pæstan plain by Persano, and crossing the river Sele (the ancient Silaris), reached the ruined temples of Pæstum early in the afternoon. The only houses on the site of, or near to, that once splendid city, were a miserable little taverna, a hut, and a half-ruined edifice belonging to the bishop of the diocese, which is rarely or never inhabited. But in the taverna, where we were fain to take up our lodging, the host had collected his family and his friends from a distance, and these, with two or three buffalo-herdsmen employed in the plain, were celebrating Easter in a room scarcely larger than the cabin of a merchantman brig. Lamb would have been too dear, and small kid too unsubstantial, for people in their circumstances, but they had had their *spezzato*, or cut of mutton, with some coarse macaroni for dinner, and had done so much justice to them that nothing was left for us but some eggs, cheese, and cassatiello, or Easter bread. Several of the party had not tasted animal food of any kind since Christmas, and were not likely to taste it again for months. The extraordinary feast had made them very gay and communicative, and when we treated them with a few bottles of the cheap country wine they enlarged with much eloquence on the pleasures of *La buona Pasqua*, and told us all about their way of living in general. For myself, I never passed a pleasanter Easter Sunday in my life, though the only beds our host on this night could give us were two

canvas sacks stuffed with straw: we did not fare much better, as far as bedding was concerned, on any one night of this Easter week. We rose the next morning—the gay morning of Easter Monday, at the dawn of day, and after having spent some time among the temples, which I had often visited before, found ourselves, at what was still an early hour, at the foot of the steep mountain which forms the background of the plain in one direction, and on which the ruins of Capaccio Vecchio, a town of the middle ages, are most picturesquely situated. While we loitered at the roots of the hill to observe some hot mineral waters which well out there, we heard the distant sound of many voices singing a sort of hymn together; and presently we saw, high over our heads, a long procession, with here and there a banner displayed, marching in single file along a narrow path on the mountain's side. This procession, in which there was much order, was followed by a loose irregular line of people to which there seemed to be no end. The narrow path led to the ruins of old Capaccio; and when we climbed up the mountain to that spot, we found, amidst fallen walls, ramparts, towers, and roofless houses, a church in good preservation, and on the esplanade, or open space before it, a multitude of the peasantry bent on keeping Easter Monday in their own way. At about nine o'clock the church was opened, and high mass performed with a good deal of magnificence. The banners carried in the procession were placed in the porch, and the interior of the church was decorated with tapestry, silks, olive-branches, and flowers. When the religious ceremonies were over, the esplanade assumed the appearance of a fair, for most of the peasants from the mountains and remote districts had brought something with them to dispose of, and wanted some other thing or things to be found at the general meeting. Many of these trading operations were, as in the infancy of society, carried on by direct barter, without the medium of any kind of money. A peasant from Persano, for example, gave a wolf's skin to a peasant from the Cilento, in exchange for a fixed quantity of almonds; a man from the Pæstan plain

exchanged buffalo-cheeses for dried figs brought from Capaccio Nuovo; another gave grannone, or Indian corn, for a pair of shoes; and the poor women, who were very busy, chopped and changed with an amusing variety of articles, as home-made cotton nightcaps, hanks of home-spun wool or cotton, linen head-gear, jackets, stockings, blankets, mole-skin purses, &c., &c. The number of skins of wild animals, particularly of foxes and wolves, was very considerable; and we learned, with some surprise, that the peasants were pretty generally in the habit of eating the wolves' flesh. There were two or three professional pedlars, with pins and needles, braids and tags, laces and ribbons, of small value; and one from Campoforte—the Sheffield of Naples—with scissors, knives, razors, and other hardwares of rather primitive manufacture. While this business was going on, fires were lit in the open air, among the ruins, and the process of cooking was carried on with much spirit. There was plenty of spezzato, maccaroni, red eggs, cassatiello, and similar luxuries of the season; and no want of a good, light, mountain wine, which was contained, as usual, in goat-skins, and cost about a penny a quart. Many of the peasants brought their own provisions with them; but there were itinerant dealers from Capaccio Nuovo and the little town of Acropoli, to supply those who had not.

A little before noon, the whole assemblage, in separate knots, most picturesquely scattered on the mountain's side, and among the ruins, sat down to dinner. We scarcely passed one of these groups without some man in it saying courteously, "*Signori, volete far Pasqua con noi?*" (Literally—Gentlemen, will you make Easter with us?) When dinner was over, some of the parties began to sing; and there were a few men who played accompaniments on the mandolina, which is a sort of guitar much used by the Neapolitan people. This was followed pretty generally by dancing,—the smoother part of the esplanade in front of the church being almost covered by parties performing the tarantella, or national dance.

At twenty-two o'clock, in Italian time, or two hours before sunset, the church was again thronged, and the priest pronounced the *benedizione*, or blessing.

As usual on most of these holidays, the poor peasants thus united devotion, business, and pleasure, all in one day; and I confess it appeared to me there was no impropriety or inconsistency in their so doing, but that on the contrary they had hit upon a very laudable and rational way of passing their Easter Monday.

Generally speaking, the men drank wine enough to exhilarate, without intoxicating them. In all that crowd I did not see a single individual that could be called drunk. There was none of that squabbling and quarrelling so common on such occasions among the peasantry of the Terra di Lavoro, near Naples, who, taken altogether, are about the worst specimens of Neapolitans. Part of this may have arisen from the different nature of the wines, which in the Terra di Lavoro are mostly produced from volcanic soils, and are very heady and fiery; but I believe still more is to be attributed to the unwise and odious practice of sending soldiers, gens-d'armes, and sbirri, to attend all the popular meetings or festivals near the capital. These men provoke, by their overbearing and interfering, ten quarrels for one that they prevent.

Soon after the benediction, the peasants began to leave Capaccio Vecchio, where there was not a single inhabited house, and to take their roads homeward. They broke up into parties that went off in every possible direction, some descending to the Pæstan plain, some climbing the lofty mountains in the rear of the ruined town, some making their way for Acropoli, on the sea-shore, and others winding round the hills, inland, to reach the high country in the beautiful district of the Cilento. As the different groups parted company, they saluted each other with shouts; and then, for the most part, went on their respective ways, singing in merry chorus. We followed the most numerous of all the parties to Capaccio Nuovo, or the New Town, which is situated in a hollow in the mountains, some two or three miles from the old town. As inns were out of the ques-

tion in such a place, we went direct to the Franciscan monastery. The friars were civil, and willing enough to feed and lodge us, but they had nothing in the shape of a spare bed. The old superior shook his head, and spoke of the poverty of the land; but after an hour's perambulation in the little town, he contrived to borrow a mattress, stuffed with the broad dried leaves of the Indian corn, from one—a couple of pillows from another—a woollen coverlet here—and one large coarse sheet there; and with these materials we made a double bed in one of the cells, in the best manner we could.

We finished the Easter Monday, and passed nearly the whole of the week with the friars, dining at table with them at half-past eleven o'clock in the morning, and supping with them at seven in the evening. We were much better off in the refectory than we were in our bed-room, for we had plenty of good wholesome food, and pleasant, light wine. Monks, novices, lay-brothers, and all, fared quite sumptuously while we were with them, having *minestra verde* (cabbage-soup), or *maccaroni*, *spezzato* (or kid's flesh), red eggs, and *casatiello*, every day; and while this unusual feasting was going on, the friars kept saying,—“by the aid of Saint Francis, we fasted during Lent till the spirit almost went out of us; but now it is Easter time, and we must be joyful.”

And these are some of my recollections of the most joyful Easter I ever passed anywhere.

SHEPHERDS OF THE ABRUZZI.

THERE is in the South of Italy a pastoral people, who, though they do not quit their own kingdom, make annual migrations with their flocks on an extensive scale and to considerable distances. These are the Abruzzesi, or peasants of the Abruzzi, two mountainous provinces in the kingdom of Naples, which, comparing things with our own, may be called the Highlands of that country. The plains about Sulmona and Chieti, two of the most important cities in these parts, indeed the whole of the valley of the Pescara; the flats and the declivities of the hills that surround the beautiful lake of Celano; some strips of land along the coast of the Adriatic, and a few other places, are susceptible of profitable cultivation, and are well cultivated; but, generally speaking, the country is mountainous and rugged in the extreme, offering little to rural economy, save almost boundless sheep-walks and browsing grounds for goats. Nature has therefore made the inhabitants of this country a pastoral people, and they are so to a degree which can hardly be imagined but by those who have visited these much neglected but interesting provinces. Entering fairly into the Abruzzi, above the romantic town of Castel di Sangro (as you do coming from Naples), the traveller finds himself in a new world, the simple, primitive manners of which are most striking. He no longer sees the vines hung in festoons from the elms-trees, nor the broad-bladed vividly green Indian corn, nor the exuberant soil bearing two crops, nor the flowering orchards and shady Italian pines, nor the thronging, noisy population he has left behind him in the agricultural and most fertile province of the Terra di Lavoro or Campagna Felice; but he sees immense flocks of sheep spread over the moun-

tain pastures, he hears the continual tinkling of goat-bells from the mountain summits, he observes that the cottages and hamlets, instead of being surrounded by gardens and cultivated fields, are flanked and backed by sheep-cotes and stables; and that almost the only quality of person he meets on his way is a shepherd clad in his sheep-skin jacket, with sheep-skin buskins to his legs, and followed by his white, long-haired sheep-dog. Instead of the water being carried along in stone or brick aqueducts for the purposes of agriculture and horticulture, as in the lowlands, he sees it, here and there, caught and conducted in hollow trees, cut from the mountain's sides, which are fashioned not like our pipes, but like open troughs, so that the flocks may drink out of them at any part of their course. Besides these simple ducts, he occasionally passes little stone fountains equally rustic in their structure, before which are placed a number of hollowed trees for the convenience of the sheep. In short, the aspect of the country is essentially pastoral.

Manufacturing and (though in a much less degree) even agricultural populations are found gradually to adapt themselves to the changes which are introduced into society and manners, and to keep somewhat near to the march of the age in which they live; but it is far different with a pastoral race inhabiting a wild and secluded country, and passing the greater part of their time in almost absolute solitude on the mountain's side: consequently the primitiveness of manners which I have mentioned as existing here is *indeed* most striking, and carries back the imagination to the early ages of the world. The Abruzzesi peasantry have the same taste for romantic traditions that distinguishes our Highlanders and the inhabitants of mountainous countries generally; they are as superstitious—they have the same love of music, and their instrument is the same as that of our northern brethren, for their *zampogna* scarcely differs in anything from the Highland bagpipe, which instrument, be it said, is also found in nearly every other mountainous country of the world. Some of their superstitions are evident remnants of classic paganism; others are a com-

pound of monkish legends and paganism, and the mass is; of course, what has arisen from the Romish church. They have a traditionary reverence for the name of their countryman Ovid, but, like the poor Neapolitans who believe that Virgil was a great magician, they make their poet's fame depend upon his having been a mighty adept in necromancy. In the town of Sulmona, the place of the poet's birth, they keep a rude stone statue which people have chosen to call Ovidio Nasone, though it is more probably the effigy of some portly abbot of the fourteenth century. As I was standing before it one day a shepherd boy, who was returning from the market in the town, took off his hat to it, as though it had been the image of a saint. I did not then know Ovid's fame as a magician, and was much delighted at what I thought a mark of popular reverence to genius, and asked myself the question whether an English peasant would doff his cap to the statue of Shakspeare or of Milton.

The Abruzzesi shepherds are a fine race of men, and make excellent soldiers, particularly cavalry; though they are naturally averse to the military service. The best disciplined and steadiest troops in Murat's army were raised in this part of his kingdom. They were patient, obedient, steady and brave in action, faithful and warmly attached to their officers whenever they were well or fairly treated by them. My friend, the Prince of ———, who was on Murat's staff in the Russian campaign, and who was severely wounded before the retreat from Moscow was begun, owed his life to the heroic fidelity of an Abruzzese soldier who attended him as an "orderly" or servant, who risked his life for him daily, and who would never quit his side until he was comparatively safe within the frontiers of Poland. This was but one example among many of the faithfulness of these mountaineers during that awful retreat. In former times their country was much infested by banditti, and one of the most famous robber chiefs mentioned in modern history—Marco Sciarra—was an Abruzzese. Except in times of execrable misgovernment, as under some of the Spanish viceroys, these depredations were almost con-

fined to the frontiers and to the mountain passes that lead into the Roman states, and the troops of brigands were rather composed of Roman and Neapolitan outlaws, invited there by the facilities for plundering, and the security offered in those mountainous wilds, than of the native peasantry. Of late years scarcely an instance of brigandage has been heard of—except in the case of a band that came from a different part of the kingdom, and was soon suppressed, mainly by the peasants themselves. In 1823 I travelled through the greater part of the country—in the wildest places alone on horseback, or only with such a guide as I could pick up among the peasantry, and instead of robbers and cut-throats I found everywhere honest people, who were civil, and even hospitable.

Winter is felt in these mountains in great, and, in some places, in its utmost rigour. The lofty summits of the Gran Sasso d'Italia (the Great Rock of Italy, the highest peak in the Peninsula) are nearly always covered with deep snow—so are the mountains above Aquila, the capital of the provinces, and many others of the ridges; while the crevasses (rifts) in the superior parts of Monte Majello that towers above Sulmona offer enduring and increasing fields of ice and glaciers that may astonish even the traveller who has seen those of the Alps. Among the wild beasts the bear and the wolf are still found in considerable numbers. The “Piano di cinque miglie,” or the Plain of five miles, which is a narrow flat valley almost at the top of the Apennines, but flanked by the summits of these mountains, and which is the principal communication with Naples, is subject to drifts, and those hurricanes called *tourmens*. Accumulations of snow frequently render the road impassable, and sometimes endanger and destroy life. The winds that blow from these mountains, even so early as the end of summer, are often bleak and piercing. The numerous flocks that feed on and beautify their pastures in summer, would droop and perish if exposed there in the winter. Consequently, at the approach of that season, the Abruzzesi

peasants emigrate with them into the lowlands of Puglia.

The plain of Puglia—the ancient Apulia—is an immense amphitheatre, whose front is open to the Adriatic Sea, and the rest of it enclosed by Mount Garganus and a semicircular sweep of the Apennines, prominent among which is the lofty cone of Mount Vultur (an extinct volcano, the craters of which are now romantic lakes). The mountains, however, generally defend the plain from the worst winds of winter, and the climate is as mild and genial throughout the year as might be expected from the favourable latitude of the place, and its trifling elevation above the sea. The want of water, and the entire absence of trees which would attract humidity to the thirsty soil, have been reasons why this immense flat has been left almost untouched by the plough or spade. The great expanse presents the appearance of an Eastern desert, over which, when not sparingly enlivened by the presence of the Abruzzesi and their flocks, you may travel in all directions for miles and miles without meeting a human being, or any signs of human industry—without seeing a tree or a bush, or any elevation in the dead flat, to mask the view of the Adriatic and the surrounding mountains.

It is said by the Neapolitan historians, that their king Alfonso of Arragon, seeing this immense plain destitute of men, determined to people it with beasts; but it is probable, from the advantages it offers, and the difficulties of their own mountain climate, that the shepherds of the Abruzzi have in all ages resorted to it in winter as they now do, and that Alfonso merely regulated some laws and duties, whose principal tendency was to enrich the exchequer of the state by deriving some revenue from waste lands. In modern times a department of government has been appointed exclusively to the charge of the “Tavogliere di Puglia,” as it is called in Neapolitan statistics; and the head of this department, who was generally a person of rank, was obliged to reside occasionally at Foggia, a large town in the plain. Of

late years, I believe, some changes have been introduced in this branch of the administration.

Every flock of sheep as it arrives is counted, and has to pay a certain sum, proportionate to its number, for the right of pasture; and, small as are these rates, from the immense droves that come, they form an aggregate which, after the expenses of collecting, &c. are paid, annually gives to the Neapolitan government many thousands of ducats.

Large sheds, and low houses built of mud and stone, that look like stabling, exist here and there on the plain, and have either been erected by the great sheep-proprietors, or are let out to them at an easy rent by the factors of the *tavogliere*. Other temporary homesteads are constructed by the shepherds themselves as they arrive; and *a few* pass the winter in tents covered with very thick and coarse dark cloth, woven with wool and hair. The permanent houses are generally large enough to accommodate a whole society of shepherds; the temporary huts and tents are always erected in groups, that the shepherds of the same flocks may be near to each other. The sheep-folds are in the rear of the large houses, but generally placed in the midst of the huts and tents. On account of the wolves, that frequently descend from the mountains and commit serious ravages, they are obliged to keep a great number of dogs, which are of a remarkably fine breed, being rather larger than our Newfoundland dog, very strongly made, snowy white in colour, and bold and faithful. You cannot approach these pastoral hamlets, either by night or day, without being beset by these vigilant guardians, that look sufficiently formidable when they charge the intruder (as often happens) in troops of a dozen or fifteen. They have frequent encounters with the wolves, evident signs of which some of the old campaigners show in their persons, being now and then found sadly torn and maimed. The shepherds say that two of them, "of the right sort," are a match for an ordinary wolf.

I have several times seen a good deal of these Abruz-

zesi shepherds in their winter establishments. The first time I came in contact with them was in the month of February, 1817, in the course of a journey through the southern provinces of the kingdom of Naples. I had no companion except the Calabrian pony that carried me, and a rough-haired Scotch-terrier (a creature of a very different disposition), when I arrived at the almost undistinguishable site of the town of Cannæ, near which the fatal battle was fought. It is in the midst of the wild plain, about six miles from the town of Canosa (anciently Canusium), and not quite so far from the shores of the Adriatic. The most perfect solitude and stillness reigned there; but when I ascended the slightly elevated mound on which Cannæ had stood, I saw in a little hollow at a short distance a very long, low tenement, at the door of which were some men with sheep-dogs, and I perceived large flocks of white sheep nibbling the short grass on all the little hillocks around me, and over the plain on both sides the river Ofanto, (on the identical field of the Roman and Carthaginian conflict,) to a great distance. The only objects that remained on the site of Cannæ were some traces of walls that once girded the mound; on the summit of the mound some excavations, or subterranean chambers, with well or cistern-like mouths, which were open; and at a little distance two large slabs of stone, placed on end in the ground, and leaning against each other,—a simple monument, by which the peasantry of the country point out the field of Cannæ, or, as they call it, “the field of blood.” Attracted by my appearance, for the sight of a stranger is a rarity, two of the men came up from the house with their dogs while I was measuring and examining the ground. Though uncouth in their appearance they were very courteous, and they not only gave me several little pieces of local information, which showed that popular tradition had faithfully preserved the memory of the great events that once occurred in that solitude, but also assisted me to descend into one of the subterranean chambers, which they called (as the chambers in all

probability had been) “granaries,” or corn magazines.*

By the time I had finished my examination and queries on the spot the sun was setting, and at the invitation of the shepherds I went down to the house. As I reached the rude but hospitable door, a tall venerable man with a snow-white sheep-skin pelisse, who had just dismounted from a shaggy little mare, came up, and bade me welcome. This was the chief shepherd. He expressed his regret that the tugurio (hut) offered so little that a gentleman could eat, but all that he had the stranger (who was too hungry to be delicate) was welcome to. A youth, the old man’s grandson, was immediately set to work to fry an omelette and some lardo or fat bacon. While this was doing, several other shepherds arrived, driving their flocks before them to the spacious cotes in the rear of the house—and later, there came others in a similar way, until all of the company were collected.

Besides my omelet and bacon, my repast was enriched with some good Indian-corn bread, some *ricotta*, which is a delicious preparation of goat’s milk, and some generous wine bought at the neighbouring town of Canosa. The sun meanwhile had set—there is scarcely any twilight in these southern regions, and before my meal was finished it was almost dark night. The kind old man did not like the idea of my travelling at such an hour: he, however, offered me two shepherds as an escort to Canosa if I would go; but if I would stay where I was, and content myself with a shepherd’s lodging for the night, I was welcome. I did not hesitate in accepting the invitation, and when my pony was put up in a sort of barn attached to the house, I made myself very comfortable on a low wooden bench which the men covered with sheep-skins for me near the fire.

When all the pastoral society was assembled, the pa-

* Corn is still kept in subterranean chambers in the same manner at Canosa, Troja, Lucera, Foggia (a great grain-market), Manfredonia, and all this part of Apulia.

triarchal chief shepherd taking the lead, they repeated aloud, and with well modulated responses, the evening prayers, or the Catholic service of "Ave Maria." A boy then lit a massy old brass lamp, that looked as if it had been dug out of Pompeii, and on producing it said, "Santa notte à tutta la compagnia" (a holy night to all the company*). The shepherds then took their supper, which was very frugal, consisting principally of Indian-corn bread and raw onions with a little wine. Some of them, after their meal, sat round the fire conversing with their visitor and others went to rest.

The whole of the interior of the room was occupied by one long apartment, in the middle of which was the fireplace, unprovided with a chimney, the smoke finding its way through the crannies in the roof and other apertures : on the sides of the apartment were spread the dried broad blades of the Indian corn and sheep-skins which formed the shepherds' beds, but there were two or three little constructions (not unlike the berths on board ship) made against the wall, which were warm and comfortable, and occupied by the old man and other privileged members of the society, one of whom kindly vacated his dormitory for the stranger. Besides these rustic beds and the wooden benches, the lamps and some cooking utensils, there was scarcely any other furniture in the room.

The scene that presented itself in that singular interior, as I peeped out of my snug berth, was such as cannot easily be forgotten. The light of the lamp—and, when that was extinguished, the flickering flames of the fire in the centre of the room, disclosed in singular chiaroscuro the figures of the shepherds sleeping in their sheep-skins, along the sides of the room near to the fire ; the rugged roof of the apartment, by smoke and time, was as black as jet, and the two extremities of the habi-

* This custom is found to prevail in nearly all the country ships. When the mozzo, or cabin-boy, lights the lamp he says, "Buona (or Santa) notte al capitano e à tutta la compagnia."

tation were lost in gloom. Some old fire-arms hung by the berth of the principal shepherd; the strong knotty sticks and the long crooks of the men were placed against the wall. Several of the huge dogs lay dreaming with their noses to the fire, and round the fire-place still remained the rude wooden benches, on some of which the shepherds had thrown their cloaks and other parts of their attire in most picturesque confusion. Soon, however, the flames died on the hearth, the embers merely smouldered, and all was darkness, but not all silence, for the men snored most sonorously; the wind, that swept across the wide, open plain, howled round the house, and occasionally the dogs joined in its chorus. These things, however, did not prevent me from passing a comfortable night, and with a sense of as great security, inasmuch as the poor shepherds were concerned, as I could have enjoyed had I been among friends in England.

The next morning, when I was about to continue my journey to Canosa, I offered money for the accommodations I had received. This the old shepherd refused, and seemed hurt by my pressing it upon him. Nothing then remained but thanks and a kind leave-taking.

These shepherds were to remain where they then were until the middle of spring, when they would slowly retrace their steps to the Abruzzi, whence they would again depart for the Pianura di Puglia at the approach of winter.

ZINGARI, OR GIPSIES.

IN our time the Zingari in the south of Italy were much more frequently spoken of than seen. The old tales and traditions of the country-people had many mentions of them, and, besides a very popular opera, there were several little comedies in which* Zingari were the principal characters. Several of the old Italian chroniclers relate the sudden appearance of the gipsies towards the end of the thirteenth century, when they came in numerous bands, and all at once, as if they had dropped from some dark cloud, or started out of the bowels of the earth. None knew whence they came, or their object in coming; no man could understand the language they spoke, or trace in it a resemblance to any known language. Their complexion, aspect, usages, were all new and most strange. Even to the swart and black-eyed people of the Roman States and the Neapolitan kingdom, they seemed very dark and black-eyed. The wild robbers of the Apennines were a smooth and civilized set of men compared with these Zingari. As they had no recognisable forms of worship, they were set down as atheists or as heathens of the worst sort. Two or three centuries later they would have run a chance of being hunted down, savagely persecuted, and even burned; but, as yet, the Inquisition was not, and there was a great deal of practical toleration in the headquarters of the Roman church. Many of the Zingari were punished for their marauding, lawless habits, but for a long time there appears to have been no active persecution of the whole class. That came later, when Christians began to differ among them-



Zingari.

selves, and when men in various parts of Europe raised the cry for Church reformation, and took up arms for Luther.

The Zingari wandered from state to state, and were seldom long fixed within the limits of one government. The minute partitions of Italy—with states not much larger than English parishes—made it easy for them to do this. It was found out in time that some of them were very knowing horse-dealers, and skilled in all the arts of the farrier, and that some had a decided genius for mending copper cauldrons; that some professed a familiar acquaintance with the stars and their influences, and that their old women very generally dealt in chiromancy and other species of fortune-telling. As a faith in astrology was then almost universal, and as even popes and princes of the church entertained their *indovini*, or soothsayers, these pretended sciences did not expose the gipsies to any particular persecution. For a very long time the palmistry of the gipsy women was allowed to pass without any challenge or interruption, being laughed at by some and believed in by others—which may be said to be the case even now, for every Zingara, or female gipsy, I saw in Italy made an open trade of fortune-telling—but it was of course otherwise when they proceeded to traffic in philters and love-potions, and hate-potions, and when it was found that poisons were occasionally used in their chemistry. Yet it does not appear that any of the hags who drove this infernal trade to a great length in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and even at a later period, either were Zingare, or had any connection or intercourse with the gipsy race. Of those of whom any record is preserved in history or annals, we believe every one was a baptized Christian, that had secretly abjured her faith and made a compact with the Evil one. They were *STREGHE*—witches or sorceresses, but not gipsies—they formed a curious variety in the strange chapter of human malignity and superstition, differing from the common witch of the north of Europe, as also from the ancient or classical witch of the Romans, yet partaking of the

natures of both. On a future occasion I may devote a page to the witch-tree of Benevento, and the real Neapolitan Strega, who still exercises an influence upon the uneducated peasantry of that kingdom and upon the populace of the city of Naples. For the present I return to the Zingari.

I cannot trace when the great band of gipsies disappeared from the Italian peninsula. History is silent on these matters, and a gipsy chronicle is rather to be desired than hoped for. All that we know of a certainty is, that troops of Zingari are no longer seen either in the Roman or in the Neapolitan states; and that even the sight of a single gipsy is very rare. I scarcely remember to have seen a male gipsy more than five or six times in the course of a good many more years, and, to my knowledge, I never saw two male gipsies together. Where the husbands and children of the women lurked I could never discover, although I was led to believe that some who outwardly conformed to the Roman church, and went to mass and confession, dwelt among the Roman Trasteverini, and at Naples, in a poor and populous and, in our time, somewhat turbulent district near the Capuan gate. It should seem that they sent forth their women to tell fortunes, and that they lived upon what the women got in this way. I certainly never heard of any of them, men or women, being in trouble for robbery, or petty theft, or any other offence. In the Campagna of Rome the women are occasionally seen travelling and pursuing their profession in pairs, like the two sibyls Pinelli has represented in his design, and who are cajoling a couple of Bovarj, or Buffolarj, in the hope of getting two or three baiocchi, or half-pence. But beyond the Neapolitan frontier I hardly ever saw two gipsy women together. The only well-known Zingara at Naples, or the only one that showed herself frequently abroad in the most open and frequented parts of that city, was a middle-aged woman, that might have stood advantageously to a painter for the picture of her class and race. Her long, dishevelled hair was slightly tinged with grey, but her eyes were

the blackest and wildest I ever beheld, and her tongue the quickest I ever heard. I had, in my time, many of her readings of fortune and predictions, and—the price of the commodity in that country being considered—paid well for them : but I need hardly add, that I have found no more truth in her soothsaying than in the extravagantly hopeful dreams of boyhood. She strictly adhered to the few fundamental rules which are common to all fortune-tellers. To the young, she promised the possession of beauty and happy love; to the middle-aged, worldly advancement with honours and wealth; to the old, more wealth, a far-prolonged life, with happy marriages for children, grandchildren, and the rest. In the lines of the hand that gave liberally she always traced the happiest and highest fortunes. In the sparing hand she always saw some crosses and traverses; and she would tell the niggard that would give her nothing, that there was an ominous sign of the gallows in his palm or on his ugly brow. She generally accosted a young man by whispering that she knew a young woman or *lady* (as the case might be) that was absolutely dying for him. In accosting a young woman or young lady, she merely changed the sex of her moribund. Being translated from the broad expressive dialect she spoke, into our vernacular, with a little allowance made for differences of customs and manners, her speeches would pass perfectly well on our race-courses and country fairs, or wherever our gipsy folk ply their trade. But, occasionally, this woman was a great improvisatrice in prose. Generally she had more of the spirit of impromptu and of poetry than the England-dwelling gipsies. One evening, at the beginning of autumn, a violent storm set in with that suddenness which is common in the Mediterranean. English sailors call it a white squall, but while it lasts there is nothing white or bright about it except the white foam. The wives of a number of fishermen who were out in their little boats beyond the island of Capri, gathered on the sandy shore between the city and Posilippo, and screamed and gesticulated, and tore their hair as they are wont

to do on all occasions of danger or risk or grief. The Zingara went up to them with a composed face, and stood stark and immoveable among them like a bronze statue, until the fisherwomen cried "La buona fortuna! La buona fortuna! (Give us the good fortune!)" "And what will ye give for the good fortune?" said the Zingara; "I have it in my pocket; what will ye give for it?" "O! Zingara bella, tell us good of our husbands, and we will give you four alici." "Presto, and give them," said the sibyl, who was so constantly giving her hundreds and thousands of ducats, "for I am digiuna" (fasting). Some of the women ran and brought her a handful or two of those Mediterranean sprats, and the Zingara tied them up in a red handkerchief; and when she had thus secured her reward, she pointed with her brown finger to the blackening sky: "Buone femmine—good females! there is not in all those clouds the wind that will trouble your husbands, or the rain that will wet their jackets—credete à la Zingara (believe the gipsy);" and then pointing downward to a bucket of water, she said, "Women, the sea, whereon your husbands are, is as smooth as *that*. Your men will all be safe home to-night; so get ready the bread and the wine, and the fire on the hearth to grill some fish. When did the Zingara say that which was not true, or did not come to pass?" She then walked away through the storm, leaving the clamorous women comforted for the while.

The Emperor of Austria, who has so many gipsies in various of his states and dominions, has turned some of them into soldiers: an experiment which, we believe, has not been tried by any other sovereign in Europe. In the Hungarian regiments serving with the Imperial army that occupied the kingdom of Naples during several years after the unfortunate revolution of 1820, there was a good sprinkling of gipsies. Their officers described them as being turbulent and troublesome, and much addicted to pilfering, but otherwise good, alert soldiers. In 1823 there was a detachment from one of

these Hungarian regiments stationed in the hilly and antique town of Venafrò—a place which should seem to have undergone little change since the days of Horace, and which is still famous for the flesh of the wild boar that was so grateful to the palate of that classical *gourmet*. A Zingara came into the town, on her way, as she said, from the Abruzzi to Capua. Some of the soldiers gathered round her to have their fortunes told. One of their officers, seeing this pastime, bade them call a gipsy comrade, in order that he might ascertain whether an Italian Zingara and a gipsy from Hungary could understand one another by speech. The man came, and he talked with the Zingara and she with him, both in a dry, hard, monotonous tone, and, to appearance, without any excitement or feeling whatever. The gipsy soldier reported that she spoke his mother's tongue, and that which was spoken by his tribe on the banks of the Danube; but he complained that she used many words that were new to him, and could not understand some of his vocables. The woman went her way among the mountains; and that night the gipsy soldier either went after her or went somewhere else where he ought not to have gone; for the next morning he did not answer at muster.

It was a good and truthful notion of Pinelli to place his weird women by and upon a fragment of an ancient Roman column. Such fragments are frequent, not only in the city, but also in the wild Campagna. The sibyls of old had many temples; the living squalid Zingara may chance to utter her vaticinations from the broken pillar of one of those splendid temples which were raised to the glory of the half-human, half-divine virgin soothsayers, and which were served and kept by a wealthy and honoured priesthood. The sibyl of old meddled with the destinies of the conquerors of the earth and the fate of the eternal city—*fata urbis Romæ*; our modern sibyl, or Zingara, prophesies in the same places about bullocks, and buffaloes, and sweethearts, and good harvests, knowing nothing of the existence of her clas-

sical prototype: the one was often made the instrument of deception for high state purposes; the other seldom does more than deceive a clown of the Campagna or a poor Roman citizen, with the sole purpose of obtaining for herself a few halfpence.

IL SALTARELLO.

THE Roman citizens, I CITTADINI ROMANI (we could never use the term or hear it applied at Rome without a melancholy smile, and a recollection of the import of *Senatus Populusque*, during the high and palmy state), are very little addicted to dancing, or indeed to any sport or amusement that requires either bodily or mental exertion. Except when excited by some strong passion they are indolent and listless, and almost apathetic. Collectively, they might say, as a fashionable regiment of light-horse* was once reported to have said, "Rome doesn't dance."

But the Trasteverini, those bold and mettlesome fellows that dwell "beyond Tiber," and of whom so frequent mention has been made in these short notes, are exceedingly fond of dancing, and perform to perfection the Saltarello, the peculiar dance of the country, as the Tarentella is the national dance of the Neapolitans, and the Monferrino the national dance of the Piedmontese. The peasants of the Roman states are also passionately fond of the Saltarello, and dance it *con brio* on all their saints' days and other holidays. We do not remember ever to have seen any other dance in the Roman suburb, or in the Campagna; but in the hilly country about Urbino, at Tivoli, and in several other districts lying towards the Adriatic Sea, the old dance once popular in England, and a great favourite with our much-dancing Queen Elizabeth, called the Volta, used to be occasionally performed; and in the districts lying nearest to the Neapolitan frontier the Tarentella seemed to be more in vogue than the Saltarello. In all these dances the dancers

* "The Tenth doesn't dance."

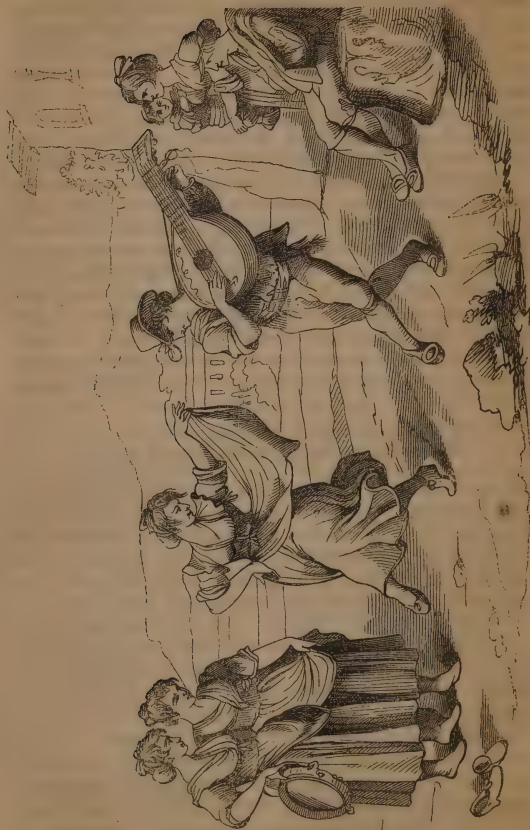
made their own music, or the best part of it, either by mandolina and voice, or by voice and castanets; the said music, when heard near at hand, being rather loud and wild than soft or melodious, and the voices being generally stretched to a cracking scream. Sometimes the partners sing together: at other times they sing in alternate strophes or verses, and occasionally the woman only plays the castanets, leaving the singing and all the rest of the music, or noise, to the man. But very commonly the bystanders and spectators of the dance join in the music, forming a loud-screaming orchestra and choir, that must be heard to be understood. When all this is mingled and softened by distance, it is pleasant enough; but the distance ought to be at least as great as that which allows the uninitiated to relish the scream of the Highland bagpipe, or the old national pipe-music of the Turks. It must have required a very great distance indeed, or more fancy than we possess, to be enabled to speak with poetical rapture of this dancing music, or of

“The lute, or mandolin, accompanied
By many a voice yet sweeter than their own.”*

Yet, when seated, on a bright summer day, on the hills behind and beyond Rome, which slope down to the great plain, and when the sea-breeze is gently blowing across that plain towards the hills, and when a festa is at the height of its jollity, in some village below, and the peasants and Trasteverini are dancing and singing outside the village, the most fastidious ear may be charmed by the softened sighs it receives, and the coldest or sternest heart may be touched by the animated picture which lies spread out beneath him.

“’Tis enough to make
The sad man merry, the benevolent one
Melt into tears,—so general is the joy.”†

* S. Rogers, ‘Italy, a Poem.’ Mr. Rogers pays this pretty compliment to the music of the Tarentella at Naples, which is by many degrees louder, more screaming and dissonant, than that of the Saltarello at Rome. † Id. id.



Il Saltarello.

The Saltarello, like the Tarentella, is a very fatiguing dance, and is performed in pairs. There may be a string or succession of pairs to any given number ; but no one pair has anything to do with the others, except to take care to preserve a proper distance, so that their gambades and violent flourishes of the arms may not interfere with one another. When the performers get warm and animated, and this seemed to happen to all that either danced the Saltarello or Tarentella, both men and women becoming as wild as the dancing dervishes of the East, when stimulated by the fumes of opium and by the strains of their wild and almost unearthly music—it would be no joke to come in contact with them, and their heavy castanets, their mandolins or tambourines. The women often look and gesticulate like Pythonesses fresh from the maddening tripod. Indeed the sedater of the peasantry and the more cautious of the Trasteverini, choose rather to perform the dance far apart, in single pairs ; while those who are particularly distinguished by their skill or proud of it, will seldom stand up and begin until others have finished, loving a *pas de deux*, and to have all eyes upon themselves. There is a story or meaning in the Saltarello as well as in the Tarentella and Monferrino ; and at times it is told in a very broad, significant, and unsophisticated way. The story is a sort of primitive courtship, varied by the coyness or coquetry of the female dancer, and animated by the passion and impatience of the wooer. The end of it is that the man drops on his knee in sign of reverence and submission to the fair one, while she beats her tambourine or plays her castanets over his head, in token of conquest and triumph, or as a Venus Victrix. But the principal object kept in view during the dance seems to be which shall hold out longest in the hard exercise, and wear out the partner. The men, though they always dance in their shirt-sleeves without their coat and jacket, and often without their waistcoat, are not unfrequently beaten in this contest by the women, whose power of endurance and passion for the dance are very often astonishingly great. We never saw dancing so much of a passion, except among the Neapolitans in

the Tarentellas, and the Spaniards of the south for their Boleros and Fandangos. It was very common to see a Trasteverina or Contadina quit the dance, looking as if she had been drawn through the waters of the Tiber, and pale, breathless, and utterly exhausted; yet, after a gulp of iced water or a slice of a water-melon, and a very short breathing-time, she would rush to the dance again, with the same or with another partner, as soon as the first note of the monotonous, but to them exciting, air was struck, and then foot it and flourish it until she was again in a state of exhaustion, or until the wearied man brought the dance to a premature close by dropping on his knee. In short, these women danced as if for life and death, or as if they had been bitten by that ballo-mania spider the Tarantula, whose venomous bite, according to some of the Neapolitan peasantry, is to be cured only by excess of dancing, the patient footing it, to the tune of the Zampogna, or Italian bagpipe, until he or she be bereft of reason and deprived of the use of every sense and limb—or, in other words, until the patient have danced himself or herself to within an inch or two of death.

Pinelli in his design has scarcely given the most graceful part of the Saltarello. There are steps and movements in it perhaps quite as graceful as those of the Andalusian Bolero. But the Roman women, though frequently majestic, and beautiful in other respects, very rarely possess the small feet and delicate ankles of the Andalusians. Even the Roman ladies—the dames and damsels of the most aristocratic stock—have very generally rather large hands and feet; perhaps, however, they are only the more classical for this. The sculptors of Greece and ancient Rome do not seem to have made beauty of form lie in the tenuity of the ankle or smallness of the foot. The Venus de' Medici has certainly a good solid ankle of her own, and the foot is far indeed from being of the smallest. The same may be said of every ancient Greek statue of Venus that we have seen, except only her little goddess-ship that is eternally, or in all the everlastingness of marble, looking over her right shoulder in the Museo Borbonico at Naples. But your severe

critics and classicists will not allow this Neapolitan Venus to be perfect, or the beau ideal of womanly beauty. In the old Roman statues and bassi-relievi the women have universally thick legs, and feet that might serve a ploughman.

The time and the place to see the Saltarello in its perfection used to be, and no doubt still are, the month of October, and the Monte Testaccio, where a festa has been held annually for time out of mind. To be present at this festival in October, and to make a good appearance in it, in new or newly laced and garnished clothes, and to enjoy a sumptuous feast upon pork and pig's fry, then coming into season (the law forbidding the slaying of pigs during the hot summer months), the Trasteverini and Contadini will half starve themselves during the preceding month of September. The extremest wrong that a husband can offer to his spouse is to refuse or fail to take her to this great annual festival. It occupies their thoughts for at least three months before it occurs, and for three months after it has passed. They date events and occurrences from it, and have traditionary records of the happy years in which the festa has been *al colmo del suo splendore*, or at the height of its splendour or glory. On the evening of the appointed day the peasantry begin to swarm into the Eternal City, some mounted by whole families together on one horse, some riding on dapple donkeys, some in the great carriages drawn by the tall and stately cream-coloured oxen, some in buffalo-waggons, and all singing and shouting at the tops of their voices, or playing the tambourine or mandolin, or other simple instrument. Young and old,—the nurslings in their mummy-looking swaddling-clothes, and the grandsire leaning on his crutch—all come, or are brought, if by any possibility they can be brought. Devotion is mingled largely with pleasure. Those who come from afar repair on their arrival to St. Peter's, or to some other church or shrine, and say many an Ave and Pater Noster before they go thence. It is a touching sight to see these congregated multitudes of country-people, and families of three or four

generations, all kneeling and praying together, with streaming eyes and with a fervour that leaves no room to doubt of the sincerity and earnestness of their devotion.

THE TARENTELLA AND FESTA DELLA MADONNA DELL' ARCO.

COMPARED with this national dance of the Neapolitans, the liveliest and noisiest Roman Saltarello is but a dull and quiet affair. One must have had the evidence of one's own senses to be able to form any adequate notion of the furore with which it is danced by the real native Tarentella professors, and of the shrill music and screams by which it is accompanied. To the town of Resina, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, from that place of rest and entertainment on the mountain romantically called the "Hermitage," because the Boniface who dispenses the bread and cheese and olives and the *Lachrymæ-Christi* usually wears a monkish dress and hood, must, we should think, be about three English miles in a straight line. Yet on a calm summer's day when the volcano was quiet, and such gentle breeze as there was blowing from the sea towards the mountain, and over the town which stands on the shore, I have distinctly heard the screaming and roaring of the voices of those that were dancing the Tarentella, or making music for those that were dancing it. Forsyth says, rather caustically, that the church processions of these people are enough to frighten a war-horse. At times they are so. But at all times this out-of-door Tarentella music is enough to terrify any horse that has not been accustomed to it. I once knew an English horse at Naples that would bolt at the first sound of a tambourine, and that never could be made to pass a Tarentella party without a hard struggle for it with his rider. Even when in his stable he would tremble all over if he heard a tambourine playing out in the street. The creature evidently knew that where a tambourine



The Tarentella.

came first, there was likely to be a Tarentella and its choir close behind.

The dance is hardly ever performed except out of doors and in the open air. The parquet is the paved road or the roadside, or the lava-flagged streets of Naples; the canopy is the over-arching sky, and whether by day or by night, or as one bright, clear, unspotted blue, or with a moon almost as bright as a northern sun, where could so glorious a canopy be gotten?

One might fancy that the excessive heat of the climate would be against it; but, in their sport, the people do not seem to care for heat. With the exception of the short and merry season of Carneval, which falls in the cool time of the year, dancing seems to be almost entirely a summer amusement with them. To do a Tarentella as it ought to be done requires room, and although the palaces of the nobility and gentry be large (in ninety cases out of a hundred, far too large for their shrunken fortunes), the lodgings of the poor and humble, especially in Naples and in the neighbouring towns, are mostly very narrow. Now and then in walking through the poorer and more peopled part of Naples on a winter's night, the sounds of the Tarentella might be heard. But this was rare. With the first Festa, or Saint's day, occurring in the spring time of the year the Tarentellari began to be seen and heard in the streets and roadsides, and they generally disappeared with the day of Ogni Santi, or All Saints, early in the month of November; though at times we have seen them performing on the Day of the Dead, or All Souls, and dancing in what seemed to us an unfeeling and heathenish fashion, from the public cemetery outside of the town where their relations and friends were interred, to their own dark abodes within the city. An old Roman, clerical, and archæological friend of mine, though bound as a priest to condemn such evident relics of Paganism, could find, on these occasions, fine scope for indulging in his classical comparisons, prototypes, and derivations. "The ancients," he would say, "tried to turn the Valley of the

Shadow of Death into a pleasant place. Go to Pompeii, and you will find that the pleasantest and gayest street in it is the Street of the Tombs, and that the tombs therein are carved with fruit and flowers, and all cheerful emblems. These Lazzaroni are only doing the same manner of thing in their way. They are dancing over the dead, and singing over the dead, and eating and drinking over the dead; and what are these sweet cakes, made, for the Day of the Dead, of meal and honey, but the type of the honey which the ancients put upon the tongue and lips of the dying?" "And are those pieces of money," said we, "that are rattling in the money-box, near the gate, the fee-pennies for Old Charon?" "Not quite that," said our archæologist, "but they are for the souls in purgatory; that money is spent in masses for the dead—for the repose and good of the defunct relatives and friends of these dancers and feasters."

But the days on which to see the Tarentella dancing in its perfection, and to its greatest extent, are the *Festa della Madonna dell' Arco*, or the Feast of our Lady of the Ark, which occurs about the middle of summer, and the *Festa della Madonna di Piè-di-Grotta*, or the Feast of our Lady at the foot of the Grotta, which occurs in the month of September, when, in most years, the air has been somewhat cooled by the first heavy fall of autumnal rain. It was an article commonly inserted in the simple marriage-contracts of the poor Neapolitans and the peasantry of the *Terra di Lavoro*, that the husband should take his wife to one or both of these annual festivals, and on no account omit so to do unless child-bearing or sickness or some other calamity stood in the way. The shrine of the *Madonna dell' Arco* stands on the summit of a lofty mountain, a peak of the Apennines, between the towns of Salerno and Avellino, but much nearer to Avellino than to Salerno. On account of the distance (above twenty miles from Naples) the *Festa* is often an affair of two or even three days for those who go to it from the capital, and who are too poor to pay for carriage conveyance. But people flock thither from much greater distances—even from as far as the borders of

Apulia, &c., on one side, and from the borders of Calabria on the other. All sorts of beasts of burden and all manner of vehicles are put in requisition. A day or two before the grand day, the hack gigs and coaches—the Canestre, Corriboli, Calessi, Salta-fosse, and every machine, however named, that has wheels—almost entirely disappear from the streets and piazze of Naples. They are all off to the Festa of the Madonna dell' Arco, and so crammed and loaded that it is marvellous they do not all break down—as not a few of them invariably do, before they get back. The vehicles, the horses, and asses are left at the foot of the mountain, or at a village above mid-way up; and the toilsome ascent is performed on foot, in the manner of a pilgrimage and penance.

While in the church, and in the presence of the unveiled miraculous effigies of the Virgin, the people are devout, silent, reverential, and very commonly in tears—in tears of adoration and tenderness; but as soon as the service is over, and the image has been worshipped, they bound from the church-door to an open level space, and begin dancing and singing with all their might, or they seat themselves among the trees on the green slopes of the mountain, and begin feasting and drinking, as if the end of the world were approaching, and their salvation depended upon their swallowing all the good things spread before them. Fires of charcoal or of wood are kindled among the trees for the cooking of maccaroni, the frying of meat and sausages, and other good things. There is lack neither of cold water nor of wine; for at a short space from the shrine there is a spring that wells out of a rock, and is as cold as ice; and if any party should have neglected to bring wine with them, there are speculators at hand from Monteforte, Avellino, Castel-Cicala, Dendicane, or some other town or village, with goatskins well filled with the best wines that grow in the country; and as this wine is only about a penny English the bottle, even the poor man may take his fill of it upon such a grand occasion, or to do honour to our Lady of the Ark. Certain it is that all parties, men and women,

drink very copiously of it. We once heard an enthusiastic and inventive French violinist talk of having heard at one time and place *quatre mille coups d'archet*, or four thousand fiddlers fiddling all of a row. We will not venture to say that there were so many mandolins on the esplanade in front of the shrine of the Madonna dell' Arco, but we may safely say that it would have puzzled a good accountant to make out the total number of mandolins, guitars, tambourines, castanets, and zampogne or bagpipes that were up there a-playing all together, or to count all the different pairs that were Tarentella-ing to this wild and shrill music.

When the feasting and dancing were all over there, or when the different parties began to think of returning to their several homes, there seemed generally to be another short visit paid to the interior of the church and to the shrine, and, after that, the parties went their way down the steep and rough mountain paths, yet stopping to foot it to the instruments wherever there was a smooth space or an approach to it. We have seen a chain of these dancers (only with a link broken here and there) reaching from the church nearly to the foot of the mountain; and, however rough the road, nearly all these dancers were footing it without their shoes, and in many instances without their thick stockings, which the peasants rarely wear at all except on some great festival like this. As it is considered pious and meritorious to go soberly and sadly up the mountain, so it is deemed orthodox to come down jubilant and jolly, and for the young to dance the whole way, except where rocks and precipices say no.

The woods and copses about Avellino produce, in amazing abundance, a very delicious kind of hazel-nut. These nuts are ripe and in season at the time of this festival, and every party that goes to our Lady of the Ark considers it an essential part of the festa to buy and bring away as many of these nuts as can, by any possibility, be carried. The neighbourhood has also a celebrity for wooden trenchers, and very small hand-buckets made of the white poplar, out of which the

poor people very commonly drink. These things, too, are purchased, and they are the more prized if they have been previously carried up to the top of the mountain and to the shrine of our Lady. The women tie some of the nuts round their necks like beads or rosaries, hang them to the loops or drops of their large ear-rings, and make green wreaths of the branches or twigs from which the nuts have been gathered, and wear them as coronals on their heads, or carry them in an equally classical manner in their right hands. The men garnish themselves with the little white hand-buckets, generally keeping one in the right hand, wherewith to salute their neighbours and friends as they meet them, by waving it over their heads, or by drumming on it with their knuckles. You will often see a donkey coming from our Lady of the Ark so loaded and covered with nuts, branches, twigs, and buckets, that you will scarcely be able to make out the species or genus, except by his salient ears and his hoofs.

As for the vehicles, whether they go upon four wheels or upon two, or whether they be large or small, they are covered all over with nuts and buckets. We used to think that this Madonna ought to be called our Lady of the Nuts, or our Lady of the Buckets; but we knew a Madonna delle Noce, or a nut Madonna, in another part of the kingdom, and perhaps the honour of the bucket was similarly pre-occupied. There was one method of disposing of the nuts which was pretty and graceful, and which helped to give variety and good processional effect to the groups as they went along, half dancing and half walking. A white wand, or just as frequently a straight sapling of hazel with the bark on it, about six or seven feet long, was hung at the upper end with nuts, strung together like rosaries, and under the nuts, stretched on a slight wooden frame, was a print rudely engraved and coloured, of our Lady of the Ark with the infant in her arms. Occasionally this wand or pole terminated with a hoop, which was wreathed round with foliage and fruit, and in the centre of which hung the picture of the Madonna. Making allowance for the difference of the

materials, and the different character of the emblem within the circle, this thing bore a pretty close resemblance to that which we see in ancient sculpture illustrative of ovations, or triumphs, or sacrificial processions. The bearer of this trophy or standard was almost invariably a woman, and generally the tallest and the finest, in person and in dress, of the party. It was alternately carried erect like a banner or flag, and carried over the shoulder like a musket.

We have seen some sketches made in the country, or while the recollections were fresh and vivid, by Thomas Uwins, Esq., R. A., which conveyed a very good notion of parts of this great festival. Much of the picturesqueness and gracefulness of the groups was in them, but the grotesqueness, the broad humour, the dashing, glaring effects, were altogether wanting; and they are to be painted only by one who shall unite in his single pencil the powers of Hogarth, Teniers, Wilkie, and Poussin, together with other qualities which exist in none of those masters, and which would hardly be produced by a union and intermingling of all their powers. A painter of genius and vivacity might make himself great by occupying this field, which has scarcely been trodden; but let no foreigner attempt it without a previous and thorough acquaintance with the manners and habits of thought of the people, and with the rich, expressive, and humorous dialect they talk. Our painters generally seem to take in ideas only by the eyes; and therefore it is that the soul of the subject is so commonly wanting.

On the return from the festa of Madonna dell' Arco, those who have determined to keep the great holiday *con tutto brio e somma galanteria* (with all spirit and perfect elegance) drive into the city of Naples with a mighty noise, and, whether they live there or in the neighbouring towns and villages, as Portici, Resina, Torre del Greco, or Torre dell' Annunziata, or in any other town or village within ten or twelve miles of the capital, they drive through the principal streets, and show themselves on the grand promenade of the Chiaja

and the Strada Nuova, the ordinary resort of the fashionable world, and the delight of all strangers or foreign visitors.

With their banners raised or with their little wooden buckets and their Avellino nuts shaking in the air, and singing and shouting to the cracking of the ear-strings, they dash down the grand street of Toledo, and through the Strada de Chiaja, or round by Santa Lucia and Chiatamone, till they come to the entrance of the Villa Reale, or public gardens, and the broad well-paved causeway which runs between the gardens and the sea, and a fine long row of lofty houses, which extends from the entrance of the gardens to the hill and grotto of Posilippo. On this broad, level, and well-paved road (paved, like all the streets of Naples, with great blocks of ancient lava cut from the flanks of Mount Vesuvius), the more adventurous and dashing sort always try the speed of their horses, racing against one another, and cutting in and out of the long and very disorderly line of canestri, corriboli, and calessi, in a manner fearful to behold. When we were new in the country, two things (where everything was a matter of wonder) particularly surprised us:—strong and spirited as their little black horses were, we could scarcely conceive how, after so long a journey, and with such a load behind them, they could possibly be kept at such a speed; and, seeing the confusion and that more than Jehu fury of driving, and the very evident state of intoxication of not a few of the drivers and passengers, we could not imagine how frequent and serious accidents did not occur. Yet afterwards, in the course of a good many years' experience, we hardly ever saw an accident that was at all serious. The truth is, those admirable little horses are very sure both of foot and eye, and are excellently in hand, and, although to an Englishman they seem to go awkwardly about it, the Neapolitans are first-rate whips.

When they have driven along the broad Chiaja, across Mergellina, and up the Strada Nuova, or new road of Posilippo, having the tomb of Virgil on the vine-covered hills above their heads, and passing close by the little

church which contains the ashes of the poet Sanazzaro and his marble tomb, they pull up their foam-covered horses at a Taverna, or house of entertainment, on the edge of a tufo cliff, just above the rocks where, according to a local tradition, that wild fisherman-king or dictator Mas' Aniello threw off the chain of gold and the costly mantle the humble and conquered Spanish viceroy had given him, to plunge into the sea to cool his fevered brain, and to sport once more with his familiar waves.

At the Taverna, wine, iced water, and other refreshments are not wanting. Those snake-shaped little cates, which are glazed on the outside with baked sugar or with honey, and which are called terraglie, are always at hand for those who have money to pay for them. Here, while some of the parties retain their vehicles in order to return through the city in splendour, others dismiss theirs, and begin the return homeward in dancing. Again the calessi and corriboli flash through the Chiaja like meteors, though like very noisy ones, for the men, women, and children are all bawling, singing, or screaming, and the rapidity and seeming perilousness of the motion does not prevent their beating the tambourine; and the close clattering of the iron hoofs on the hard lava swells that hubbub of sound. Then down come the Tarentella dancers, dancing in pairs, the one after the other, in a continuous line of dance, or with only a few short links broken in it, or a few gaps or intervals between. Down they come by the gentle slope of Posilippo to that cool pleasant under-cliff place called Mergellina, and thence by a curve upon the broad straight Chiaja. In those not bad days, when old Ferdinand of the large nose (Ferdinando Nasone) was king, and when all popular sports and national usages were encouraged and promoted, instead of being discouraged, as we are told they now are, I have seen a chain or column of dancers have its head midway in the Chiaja, and its rear or tail half a mile off at Mergellina. As in all these celebrations, the sunny brightness of the cli-

mate, the purity and transparency of the atmosphere, and the gay warm colours which the peasants as well as their wives affect in their dress, greatly enhanced the beauty of the picture. It was very generally the custom of the women to take off their holiday shoes and intrust them to the keeping of a relation or friend before they began dancing. The practice of going barefooted was much commoner among them than ever we saw it in Scotland, however much may have been said and written about the lilting unshod lasses of the north. Occasionally the Neapolitan peasantry wore zoccoli, or wooden clogs, fastened over the instep by a strong leather strap, which sometimes reached to the toes. The zoccolo, in short, consisted of nothing but a thick wooden sole and this leather strap for the fore part of the foot. As it was not anyways fastened towards the heel, it made a rapping clacking noise in walking. This sound had found a place in the simple and rough amatory poetry of the country. I yet remember a few disjointed lines of a love-song wherein the amorous swain sings to his mistress words in patois which may be thus freely translated :—

When I hear thy clogs
Upon the lava stone,
My heart goes rat-tat-tat,
And flies to thee alone.
No instrument so sweet
As the wood beneath thy feet.

This may remind the reader of the good old song which the good wife of Scotland sings of her good man :—

“ His very foot has music in ’t
As he comes up the stair.”

But these zoccoli, among the more prosperous of the paesane, are thrown aside on the great festal days, and holiday shoes, frequently made of velvet, and embroidered with silk and silver or gold thread, are worn. Like the

coral necklaces, and the gold rings, and the large pendant ear-rings, these holiday shoes are preserved with great care, are very seldom used, and are very commonly heir-looms, or articles of property carefully transmitted from one generation to another. The embroidered shoes on the feet of that young buxom matron may have been worn at some festa of the Madonna dell' Arco by her grandmother. Far too rich and rare are they to dance in; so she foots it to the Tarentella music in her strong linen thread stockings, which she will probably dance through before she gets home. Far have many of these matrons and damsels to go, and they will dance the Tarentella, or take their turn in it, till their joyous journey is ended. As one pair grows weary, its place is supplied either from one of the flanks (which between them hedge in the dancers with a double line), or from the rear, where there usually march some ministering spirits with cool wine and iced water.

The music of the Tarentella is always one and the same; but the words which are sung to the music and to the dance vary *ad infinitum*. Most of these choral songs are very old, and but few of them have ever been preserved and transmitted by writing. They are all preserved by memory and transmitted orally. Many of them smack of great age; they are, for the most part, in the very rudest patois of the country, and primitively rough and straightforward in their style and expression, and yet not often gross. Of a very favourite one two lines ran in this homely vein:—

“Fegato fritto e baccalà!

In 'ccoppo 'na camera a pazzià.”

With dried salt cod and liver fry,
Up in a room to play sky-high.

Some few are pretty enough, and in better Italian. Of this last class, the only one I can now recollect began in this fashion:—

“Sei bella, sei buona,
Sei tutt' amorosa,
Mi pari 'nna sposa,
Io muoro per te.

Bellezza piu rara
Non biddi giammai,
Una donna piu cara
Piu bella di te.”

Thou art good, thou art fair,
Thou art loving and free,
Thou seemest a bride,
I am dying for thee.

A beauty so rare
Ne'er saw I till now,
Or a woman so dear
Or so lovely as thou.

As the common people sing their accompaniment to the Tarentella dance, or their songs to the mandolina, screaming and mistaking an excess of noise for effect, there is certainly little music or melody in them; but, treated in a different manner, a fine melody may be brought out of some of them, in unison with that naïveté and simplicity which never fail to charm a good and natural taste. A lady of the highest rank and most ancient lineage, the Duchessa di —, who had too kind a heart and too clear a head to despise as vulgar everything that was popular or essentially of the people, could sing some of these old dance-songs and street-ditties in the most enchanting and touching manner. As for dancing the Tarentella, I most rarely saw any Neapolitan gentlefolks that could do it well, or that would even attempt to do it, it being considered “so very low.” Of foreigners I never knew but two that could do their part in the dance to perfection: the one was a young artist of French family, who had been born and bred in the country; the other is Mr. Charles Matthews, who has lived for a short time at Naples. But Mr. Matthews can sing the Tarentella song as well as he can dance the

dance. His whole performance is a perfect truth. It is so natural and free, and full of life and brio, as to have nothing of the character of a mere imitation. As he sings, shouts, and dances, so do the youngest and best of the Tarentellari, in the land where the Tarentella is native to the soil.

THE CANTA-STORIA.

THE Molo of Naples is a strong, well-constructed stone pier, jutting far into the sea like Ramsgate pier, giving security to the harbour, and having at its extremity a goodly lighthouse. In the warm seasons of the year (that is to say, for nearly seven months out of the twelve) it is the favourite promenade and lounging place of the Neapolitan bourgeoisie and poorer classes of citizens, who are but too happy to escape from the hot pent-up air of their narrow and tortuous streets and lanes. On the Molo they can hear the cooling splash of the sea upon the rocks, and inhale the pure evening air. And, as if this were not pleasure and bliss enough, under that glorious sky, and with the fairest view upon earth spread before and around, hither resort singers and conjurers, mountebanks and improvisatori, men with learned pigs, and men with dogs that can tell fortunes, to afford amusement to the promenaders and loungers. The vividness of my impressions, which lays the whole scene before my eyes, makes me use the present tense when I ought rather to use the past. I am told that the busy and merry Molo has been almost ungarnished, of late years, of the men and things which made its merriment; and that a police far more ruthless than that which sometimes waged war in our streets against Punch, hath swept away Policinella, Canta-Storia, Ciarlatano, pig and dog, together with every other object that used to raise a boisterous laugh. But I can only think of the Molo as it was in its pristine glory, and when, as Forsyth observed, it was an epitome of the town, exhibiting the most of its humours,—a theatre where any stranger might study, for nothing, the manners of the people. For mixed fun, it was assuredly the richest theatre in the

world. With the very few strangers who thoroughly understood the rich Neapolitan patois, nothing in Naples could rival it except the theatre of San Carlino, or the Little St. Charles, on the nights when the great living Policinella was in full force and playing in one of his best pieces, such as "The Ninety-nine Misfortunes of Punch," or "Punch and the Man of Bisceglia."

The *Canta-Storia*, literally the story-singer or history-singer, is one that sings some tale or romance in rhyme, in a sort of measured recitativo style, to the accompaniment of a mandolina or guitar, which is played sometimes by himself and sometimes by an assistant. The greatest professor in this line that I knew—the man that was called *par excellence*, in their idiom, *lo canta-storia in 'ccoppo o Molo*, never played the instrument himself—being somewhat lamed and maimed, and needing the only arm and hand he could use for his gesticulations and explanations. He was a short, lean, wizened old man, with an enormous three-cornered hat on his head, and with nose and eyes like those of a hawk. For fluency of speech, and for smart and sharp repartee, it was a wondrous old creature. Some complained that his voice was cracked, and his singing not what it had been; but all confessed that for explaining a difficult passage, and making flowery poetry intelligible in plain prose, there was none like him. He ought to have been a commentator, for, in his own way, he could explain everything, allowing no obscurity or difficulty whatsoever to stand in his way, and never seeming to entertain a doubt as to the correctness of his illustrations. The only story-singer that rivalled his fame was a handsome well-made mariner with a clear and resonant voice; but though people, particularly the women, loved to listen to his singing and to his mandolina, they preferred going to the Elder for the commentaries and gloses.

The stories thus sung to the sailors and poor citizens of Naples were almost invariably about the battles and loves of their great national idol, the Crusading Rinaldo, as described by Tasso in his 'Jerusalem Delivered.'



Marinari sul Molo di Napoli ascoltando l' Istoria di Rinaldo.—
From Pinelli.

To have recited Tasso in his pure and exquisitely refined Italian would have been to throw away time and labour, as very few of the auditory would have understood it. But the old Canta-Storia had a Tasso of his own, all turned into Neapolitan language and rhyme—or rather he had a *rifacciamento*, dressed up in his vernacular, of all the cantos and stanzas which referred to the exploits and adventures of the national hero, and from which were dismissed, as unworthy of any notice, the pious Godfrey, the hero of the Epic, the bold Tancred, and all the other Christian heroes of Tasso. The popular admiration for Rinaldo amounted to a passion, to an enthusiasm of the most unaffected and ardent kind. When the old minstrel would sing how the Christian hero with one cut of the sword or one thrust of the lance slew a score of Pagans or put thousands upon thousands to the rout, there would be a shout of “Eh! viva Rinaldo nuostro!—Long live our Rinaldo!” When the tone and story changed,—when the sage old man in the three-cornered hat would represent the hero in some disastrous adventure exposed to the malice of witches and magicians, and beset by a host of cruel Pagan foes, tears would stand in the eyes of many of the listeners, or now and then drop from them, like large summer rain-drops, upon the hard flags which paved the Molo; and there would be a muttering of woe, as if a real and visible calamity had befallen some dear relative or friend—*Ah! povero Rinaldo! Ajutati Dio*—*Ah! Streghe maledette, Saraceni infami, il Diavolo vi avrà tutti!*—Ah! poor Rinaldo, may God help thee! Ah! cursed witches, infamous Saracens, the devil will have ye all!”

Not only these poor fellows appeared to have no doubt as to the real existence of Rinaldo, or the authenticity of the moving adventures they were listening to, but they also seemed to feel as though Rinaldo were still living and actually engaged in his dolorous misadventures—there! right before their eyes, yet where they could not reach him or give him help. I have seen the magic of the stage as exercised by Siddons and Kean; but I never saw people so carried out of themselves and

the material existing world around them by those great actors and the spell of the greatest of poets whose characters and creations they were embodying, as I have seen the poor Neapolitans wrapt and transported by the rude verses monotonously chanted by that wizen old man in the three-cornered hat.

In those days, before the glories of the Molo had begun to depart, there were some sets of men, for the most part young, and mariners or fishermen, who were called *gli appassionati di Rinaldo*, or the impassioned or enthusiasts for that hero and darling.

Evening after evening, week after week, these fellows would gather round the Canta-Storia, and devour his strains with an avidity of appetite, and an earnestness of expression on every countenance, which proved how much they relished what he sang. Fine athletic fellows were some of them, and sun-browned the faces, long and black the hair, and black and flashing the eyes, of all of them. And they were gathered in groups round the old bard or minstrel, as the somewhat more refined Greeks may be supposed to have done round the itinerant Homer, some of them standing with their arms crossed on their almost bare chests, some sitting on the stones which capped the parapet of the pier, some on wooden stools, and some cross-legged on the pavement. In this fashion they would often stay from long before sunset of a summer evening until well on to the midnight hour, listening over and over again to the same parts of the story; for the sage old man, like the professional story-tellers of Egypt and Turkey, never began and ended his tale on the same night, generally breaking off at some point where the narrative was most interesting, and telling his auditors that he should conclude his story on the morrow. This little ruse was calculated to ensure the attendance of those who had been interested to-night. But with the appassionati—with the real enthusiasts for Rinaldo—it was scarcely called for: they were sure to be to-morrow night where they were to-night. By the setting sun or by the broad moonlight the scene was eminently picturesque and poetical. On one side of the Mole, in the not over-

sweet harbour, lay huddled together merchant ships and coast traffickers, emitting no very savoury smells; on the other side were the starch monotonous walls of the Castello Nuovo, the back of the royal palace, and the entrance to the arsenal; but behind rose the fine-shaped hills of St. Elmo and the Vomero, the one crowned by a bold castle, the other by a magnificent monastery with a Moresque-looking face; and behind and above these hills, and stretching far away, towered the heights of the Camaldoli, with another convent on their brow, and the heights of the Arienella, in whose white village, half hid among trees and tall-growing vines, was born Salvator Rosa, the fittest painter to paint the half naked enthusiastic group. And then in front, or by turning a little on the Molo so as to vary the point of sight, the eye could rest upon the broad flank and forked summit of Mount Vesuvius, with smoke or fire issuing from the nearer of the two cones; upon the long white walls of Castellamare, and the sublime peak of Mount St. Angelo behind them; upon the old town of Sorrento, standing immediately over the sea; upon high and perpendicular cliffs of tufo; upon Cape Campanella, or the Cape of Minerva, behind which the Parthenopean Syren had her abode; upon the rocky and majestic Isle of Capræa, to sojourn in which Tiberius abandoned the imperial city of Rome; upon Cape Misenum, which hath borne, and bears, and ever shall bear, the name of the Trumpeter of Æneas, even as Virgil predicted in his melodious verse,—for true poets are prophets, and the names hallowed by genius are no longer subject to decay and transmutation; upon the long glittering hills of Posilippo, where Lucullus built his palace of palaces and established his earthly paradise; and upon the grim dark-brown old castle which the Norman conquerors of the south built upon a rock close in to the Neapolitan shore and the western walls of the city—the castle called dell' Uovo, or Egg-castle, from the shape of the rock on which it stands, and which it entirely covers. This is a rare scene, and overpoweringly rich in associations. There is not a hill, rock, islet, cape, or jutting promontory, but has its name in classical

lore or in modern song. Sorrento, which stands on the other side of the bay almost directly opposite the Molo, was the birthplace of Tasso, who first gave immortality to the Rinaldo the old minstrel sings about: it was at Sorrento, among green hills and shady valleys and glens wooded with the ilex, that the ardent poet passed the happy days of his childhood, which, if his biographers tell the truth, appear to have been almost the only happy days of his stormy existence; and it was to Sorrento and to the kindness of a surviving sister that the poet fled, poor, lonely, and on foot, when sovereign princes and princes of the Roman church had forsaken him and persecuted him, and when terror and long suffering had well nigh made him in reality that maniac which his enemies, long before, had accused him of being, and under the dark imputation of which he had lain for long years in the dungeon of the ungrateful Esti at Ferrara.

The Canta-Storia's version of Tasso's great poem in the Neapolitan dialect was far from being so elegant or so close to the original as was the Venetian version which was at one time commonly sung by the Gondolieri of the Queen of the Adriatic. If much that Tasso wrote was omitted, much also was added by the Canta-Storia which the poet never wrote or dreamed of. These Neapolitan interpolations and addenda were extravagant to the utmost verge of extravagance, and not unfrequently grotesque in the eyes of those who knew the original and had a more cultivated taste than the mariners on the Molo. But to these poor fellows nothing could be finer, or grander, or in any sense better, than what they heard sung or chanted in their own expressive dialect by the wizened old man, or by the handsome and galliard young man. The Appassionati, or enthusiasts, would have fought any man that had adventured to dispute the pre-eminence of Rinaldo over all the heroes of Tasso's epic, or rather over all the heroes that figured in the Holy Wars or in any other wars. This temper was once put to the test. A foreigner familiar with their language and habits, began one evening to decry their idol-hero. Rinaldo, he said, was a stout and daring man, a very stout and daring man (*un' guappo, un guappone*), but there had been men as brave as he, or

braver, Tancred to wit, who was also their own countryman; and there had been wiser and better and greater men, like the captain-general Godfrey. The faces of the enthusiasts blackened with rage, and their eyes shot flashes of fire. The stranger, apprehending mischief to himself, prudently dropped his odious comparisons, and said he had but joked. "*Va bene lo schierzo*," said one of the group, "*ma con Rinaldo nuostro non si schierza*"—Jokes are very well, but there must be no joking with our Rinaldo. No honest Swiss ever stood up more boldly for the fame of William Tell, or fiery Scot for the glory of William Wallace or of the Bruce, than that tattered mariner would have done for the fabulous renown of Rinaldo.

It was the custom of the old man with the three-cornered hat to stop at every two or three stanzas, in order to take breath, and then to answer any queries that might be put to him. His cool, yet quick mode of performing the last-named office was inimitable. For example, he had been describing, or reciting in the poem, a blow given by Rinaldo to a grim Saracen, or to some enchanted tree, and the noise of that terrible blow was so loud that it had been heard across continents and seas, in China. "Where is this China?" says a mariner. "A good deal farther off than Capo di Chino," responds the minstrel;—the said Capo di Chino being a hill on the road towards Rome, and barely one mile from the suburbs of Naples. "But how far off is it?" rejoins the querist? "Not above a hundred thousand leagues," replies the Canta-Storia. "*E di grazia*, and pray what sort of a beast is this griffin?" asks another. "A griffin," says the old man, putting his index finger to his nose, "is a griffin. That is good to say, it is a monster, half bird and half beast, with a particle of the reptile in it, having a dragon's head, a body like a horse, eagle's wings, a serpent's tongue, a dragon's tail, eagle's talons, and lizard's skin and legs." "Is it very big?" "About as big as the biggest of those ships in the harbour," says our poetical naturalist. "And are there many of them living now in the unchristian countries?" This query, like many others, he evades with a very sapient look,

and a "*non ci vogliono dimande*" (such questions are unnecessary). "But why," says a moralizing youth, "did that good Christian Cavalier Rinaldo allow himself to be led astray and shut up in the enchanted palace by that beautiful wicked witch Armida?" "*Figlio mio!* my son! why dost thou run after Paschariella, the washerwoman's daughter, and go oftener to the taverna than to mass? Why! because thou art duped by the devil in the shape of a woman, and because the temptations of wine and macaroni be too strong for thee." "What means the land of the rising sun?" "Nothing more than this—that it is a country so near to the sun, that when he gets up in the morning thou mightest throw thy red night-cap in his face and hit him."

Somewhat in this manner did the ancient sage in the three-cornered hat resolve all questions. However ridiculous was his matter, his face was always as grave as a tombstone. He was paid for his singing, his poetry, his comments and explanations, by voluntary donations, sometimes in the smallest copper coin of the realm, and sometimes in kind, as in wine, fish, fruit, macaroni, or the like. The *Appassionati* were, of course, the most liberal; but now and then his eyes were made to glisten by some curious traveller, who, in gratitude for the amusement he had received, would drop a piece of silver into an old hat which was generally placed before him, modestly and unobtrusively, on the ground.

He lived in a dark crooked lane, near the Mercato, or great market-place, where Mas Aniello began his memorable rebellion, by oversetting the taxed fruit-stalls, and by shouting that God sent the people of Naples abundance, though their wicked government made them perish of hunger! Wized as the old Canta-Storia was, it was not from want of food or of money to purchase it. I was told that when at home he fared sumptuously, eating macaroni every day, and meat on the high Church festivals; that he slept, like a duke, through most of the hot hours of summer, and rarely went abroad until the sun was nigh sinking in the west, and the cool evening breeze was rising. His life was certainly

a more prosperous one than that of many professed poets and teachers of poetry (in Naples, spite of Horace's dictum, poetry was taught like music, or drawing, dancing, fencing, or any other art or accomplishment; only the fees or lesson-price paid to the *Maestro di poesia* were infinitely lower than what were usually paid to the poorest of dancing-masters or fencing-masters). God help them! A hungry, tattered, despised set were these Neapolitan poets and poem-makers in my time! If they lived upon their genius, their genius was always promising them what she never gave:—

“Come rimane estatico un villano
Quando il giocalator di porgli finge
Un francescone sulla vòta mano,
E stringila, gli dice, ed ei la stringe,
Poi l' apre, più non trova la moneta,
—Così è rimasto il povero poeta!”*

As gaping rustic at some country fair
Clenches his horny hand on subtle air
Thinking to hold a good bright shilling there,
Then, at the conjurer's bidding opes his fist,
And finds within it neither coin nor grist,
—So fares poor poet in his money-kist.

We have known some of these Neapolitan poets write three odes for a dinner and sell a sonnet for a cup of coffee; but it was not often that their productions were such marketable commodities. In *genteel* society, the term *poet* meant a fellow without a shirt, and one that was very crazed, very dirty, and very hungry. Our friend on the Molo could every night close his palm upon something more substantial than empty air. But the flesh even of minstrels, rhapsodists, and bards is mortal. Homer himself died, though he left behind him that which can never perish; and one day our old Cantastoria passed “*al numero de' più*,” or “to the majority,” as the Italians call the countless dead. He was said to have left a good many ducats behind him—a proof of his

* Poesie Giocose del Dottore Antonio Guadagnoli, d'Arezzo, Milano, 1840.

good management and of the liberality of his hearers. One great Policinella of San Carlino died, and was forthwith succeeded by another of equal excellence. It was not so with our great Canta-Storia: his place on the Molo was taken, not filled, by a fat, obese, dull, heavy-visaged man that went upon crutches and wore no three-cornered hat. His wit went upon crutches as well as his body, for it was very lame and slow. The enthusiasts of Rinaldo bemoaned the loss they had sustained: but the verses he had sung were still dear to them, and their passion for the fame of Rinaldo could not know abatement. Moreover there remained for some time longer the young Canta-Storia of the loud voice and the mandolina. When I left the country, eighteen years ago, the song of Rinaldo still formed one of the strongest attractions to the Molo.

Tasso is not the only classic and epic poet with whose text the Neapolitans have taken liberties. There is a version of the seven first books of the Iliad by a distinguished Neapolitan advocate and wit who flourished in the early part of the last century;* but this is printed and published—*è un libro stampato e dato alla luce*—and is intended for the amusement and laughter of the educated and learned. Nobody, we believe, ever knew who it was that mixed his own Neapolitan feathers with the Tuscan plumage of Tasso, or who originally composed the story of Rinaldo as it was sung or chanted on the Molo. Certain it is that he was no mocker or scoffer; that he revered the subject he had in hand, and that, however laughable it may seem to the refined and critical, it was meant to be taken in sober seriousness by the poorer multitude. It is probable, however, that the composition had been altered and enlarged by many successive story-singers. I never saw it in print. My old friend of the three-cornered hat, who, I fear, must be called the last genuine Canta-Storia, sometimes aided his memory by glancing at a very greasy manuscript, which

* Varie Poesie di Niccolò Capassi, primario Professore di Leggi nella Regia Università di Napoli.

did not seem to have been written either in his days or in those of his father. I noticed more than once that he did not strictly adhere to this text, but altered and varied according to his whim, occasionally omitting whole stanzas which contained nothing about fighting or about witchcraft, and which therefore might be considered by the mariners as tame and insipid. Whatever he introduced was cadenced and rhymed. He was an improvisatore. Peace to the old rhapsodist's ashes! I have done more for his memory than any of his countrymen are now likely to do.

IL CIARLATANO.

THE Ciarlatano, or Charlatan, or mountebank, was a very frequent sight in the streets and squares of Rome in the days of Bartolommeo Pinelli; although then, and a few years later, that personage was seen still more frequently in the streets of Naples. Generally, however, he was native to neither of those two places. Judging from their language and accent, we should say that nearly all these Italian Charlatans, between the years 1815 and 1827, were natives of Tuscany, only a few being from Lombardy, from Brescia, Bergamo, &c. Their impudence and loquacity, their quickness of hand and eye, and of repartee, were amusing. Some of them almost rivalled the popularity of Punch and the Burattini, whom they always affected to treat with great contempt. Their dress was various, but always very fantastical and fine. Although they dealt exclusively in the healing art, they gave a decided preference to the costume of the killing art: I never saw one of them dressed at all like a doctor (not even like the quack-doctor of Venice and of Italian comedy); but I have seen scores of them habited like soldiers. Most of my acquaintance had a decided predilection for the showy cap, and gold-laced, embroidered, and tagged jacket of the hussar, and for Turkey-red or amaranthine-coloured pantaloons. Moreover they often wore Hessian boots, with many wrinkles over the calves, and with long ringing brass spurs at the heels. Nor was the trailing sabre or the natty cartouche-box missing, the latter often serving as the depository of the most precious of the drugs they were trying to vend. They invariably wore glittering ear-rings in their ears, and heaps of rings on their hands. They would tell the poor peasants what great man or great dame had given them this ring, or that, for some wonderful cure; and, in

the eyes of the credulous, their glass and paste easily passed for diamonds and other precious stones. Nor is it to be supposed that the ear-rings detracted from their martial appearance. As late as the end of Bonaparte's career most of the French and Italian army wore ear-rings. We have seen moustached colonels of dragoons and bearded grenadier officers wearing diamond ear-rings. Murat, the greatest of cavalry officers and sabreurs, never gave up the fashion. He had a pair of diamond rings in his ears when all his adventures were so tragically finished at Pizzo in Calabria. At times the Professori contented themselves with stools or chairs ; but, when they could, they ascended a stage.

The stage on which the Ciarlatano usually exhibited consisted of a few planks laid upon tressels, with a canvas screen at the back, and sometimes with a smaller canvas screen on either side, on which were painted dragons, serpents, and other monsters, both real and imaginary. At most the stage was little more than a bench, called in Italian *banco*, whence the professional synonyme of mountebank. When well furnished, the professor (they always styled themselves *professori*) had a number of bottles and phials, containing snakes, vipers, scorpions, hugeous spiders (not omitting the Calabrian tarantula, the bite of which can be cured by nothing but dancing !), and some three or four live serpents of different sizes. The "tortoise hung" was not uncommon ; and we have now and then seen the "alligator stuffed." The "other skins of ill-shaped fishes" were quite common, as were also the "empty boxes,"

"Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses ;"

which make up the stock-in-trade of Shakspeare's Mantuan apothecary.

The live snakes are made to play a very great part in all these exhibitions. In Italy, as in England, the only reptile of this shape whose bite is at all poisonous is the viper or adder, and there, as here, that creature is not very often found in the commission of mischief. But the Ciarlatano counts on the deep-rooted and universal an-



Il Ciarlatano.

tipathy men bear the serpent ; and although no peasant ever knew any harm done by any of the species he handles so fearlessly, they are all astonished at his courage or at his magical skill as they see him let the great black and green snakes twist round and round his neck, and hiss (as he pinches them) into his open mouth, or as he throws back his hussar jacket and converts his bare arm into a sort of Caduceus wand, with serpents coiling round it, and across one another, and uniting their hissing heads above his uplifted hand. I cannot say that I ever saw them deal either with live vipers or live scorpions (all of their scorpions and vipers being preserved in spirits), but we are told by the ingenious Francesco Redi, author of the best modern dithyrambic and anacreontic, ‘*Bacco in Toscana*,’ in one of his prose works, that the Ciarlatani of his time, in order to show the power and the value of their antidotes, were accustomed to eat scorpions and the heads of vipers. And this they might do without any danger, provided only they killed the creatures first and avoided being stung or bitten ; for the venom, which is dangerous when introduced into the blood, is perfectly innocent when introduced into the stomach, and *vice versâ*—so that Queen Eleanora might have sucked the wound inflicted upon her husband by the poisoned dagger with very little peril to herself. The antidotes which Redi (who was a learned physician and naturalist, as well as an excellent poet) treats with little respect, are still sold by the professori, and consist entirely of viper-broth or of some of the spirit in which the scorpion or the other reptiles have been preserved. But I have seen these liquids sold not merely as cures, but also as preventives, the vender assuring his credulous customer that so long as he kept them no noxious creature could sting or bite him. To the viper-broth many other additional virtues were attributed. But, without any direct aid from Charlatans, the faith in this panacea is still very strong among the rural population of England ; and I was recently assured by a Kentish gamekeeper that there was nothing like a decoction of vipers, or “viper’s oil,” for the curing of all manner of bad eyes.

Indeed there was not a physical evil under the sun but these Italian professors would cure with their decoctions, their elixirs, their powder charms, and their pills; while most of these evils were to be prevented if the good people would only buy their charms in time. Some of our home-born and home-practising quacks display considerable genius with the pen, and in advertising and puffing by means of newspapers and hand-bills and placards; yet their performances are dull indeed compared with the extemporised effusions and spoken eloquence of the Italian professors I was acquainted with a quarter of a century ago. Their name of Ciarlatano is derived from the verb *Ciarlare*—to talk a great deal, and without any attention to truth. No men could have better merited the name, or could have talked more and with a bolder defiance of fact. Yet their lies, stupendous in their magnitude, were generally well linked together, being all, as Tony Lumpkin expresses it, “in a concatenation accordingly.”

There was one professore that used to exhibit among the Trasteverini at Rome, and to travel frequently between the Eternal City and Loretto, Sinigaglia, and the various papal towns on the Adriatic shore. Most of his brethren had a scrap or two of old and dirty parchment, which they would flourish in the eyes of the ignorant as diplomas from foreign universities; but this fellow, instead of one or two, had a score of such parchments, some of which, as he solemnly represented, were diplomas conferred upon himself, some of them diplomas conferred upon his father, and some upon his grandfather; for the medical sciences were hereditary in his family, and his grandfather had attained to the highest fame as family physician to the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa or the Red-Beard! It was nothing to him that this great emperor had been dead considerably more than six hundred years. He cared nothing for chronology, or for geography, or for any other stubborn science; he counted with an illimitable confidence upon the ignorance of his auditory, and upon the effect to be produced by great names and sonorous phrases; and his imagination being

altogether untrammelled, it took the boldest flights. He could cure the Emperor of China of a fever and ague at Pekin in one day, and draw a tooth of the Great Mogul of India at Delhi on the next; from India to England was but a step to him, and he could traverse Spain, France, Germany, Russia, with a speed tenfold greater than that of the seven-leagued boots. Wherever he had been, his pills and elixirs, his charms and antidotes, had done miracles, and had procured for him gold and glory. The Chan of Tartary was in despair when he quitted his court, and the Czar of Muscovy and all his court had gone into deep mourning the day he had left them. But, such was his love for his own native country of Italy, and more especially for the Trasteverini of Rome, or the good people of Loretto, or of Sinigaglia (or of any other place where he might chance to be), that he had renounced all the advantages which foreign courts and potentates could confer upon him, in order to offer to the said good people a cure for every complaint and the means of reaching a healthful and happy old age for a few half-pence or farthings a-piece.

"Here 's a box of pills," he would say, opening and showing the contents of the box, "here 's a box of pills for ye! I have had twenty scudi for a smaller one, but ye shall have it for twenty bajocchi. What, nobody to buy? Ah, untutored people, ye know not what ye are losing! Well, such is the love I bear ye, ye shall have it for ten bajocchi. How! no one to buy at ten? There, old yellow-face, take it at five, 't will cure thy tertian and drive away all future effects of malaria. What! not take it at five? The Great Mogul would give me the golden crown off his head for it! Well, give me three bajocchi, for I see thou art but poor, old yellow-face. So! and now here 's an elixir! My elixirs are more wonderful than my pills. I wish ye could only go to Pekin and ask the principal wife of the emperor's head minister, that great mandarin Fom-fo-fee, what one of these little, little bottles did for her. Mayhap, too, the great king of England could tell you something about this magical potion, for it was all through one of these little bottles

that he beat Bonaparte and put the Dey of Algiers in an iron cage! There is health and strength in this elixir, there is beauty and love in this elixir, there is long life in this elixir, there is everything that is good in this elixir!"—and so he would go on with a never-flagging extravagance, until he sold the balm of life for two or three pence.

At Naples there was a standing feud between these alien ciarlatani and the native professori—more especially the indigenous tooth-drawers who practised, *sub cælo*, on the mole and extracted the tusks of mariners and lazzaroni with portentously large iron pincers. The old Cantastoria of the three-cornered hat had no patience or charity for the foreign intruders. He used to call them vile impostors. Upon the Mole proper they seldom ventured to intrude. Their usual post was in the broad street which leads by the Post Office and the Castello Nuovo to the Mole, or in Castle-square—il Largo del Castello—which, in my time, was appropriated for all manner of popular uses. It is now a much cleaner and more orderly place, but not half so amusing.

It has been noted, by a classical traveller who loved to compare the modern with the ancient usages of Italy, that the serpents may be considered as emblematic of the profession of these charlatans. The figures of *Æsculapius* and *Hygeia* have always a serpent in hand, for, as that reptile is said to be restored to youth and vigour on casting his skin, in like manner is the human body renovated by the healing art of medicine.* A modern ciarlatano without his snake, would be like a *Policinella* without his mask.

* 'Vestiges of Ancient Manners and Customs discoverable in Modern Italy and Sicily.'—By the Rev. J. J. Blunt, Fellow of St. John's, Cam., etc. London, 1825.

IL GIUOCO DELLA MORRA.

THE game of the Morra, which is very ancient in Italy, is thus played :—

Two men or boys (we never saw women or girls play at it) place themselves opposite to each other, and at the same instant of time each throws out his right hand, with so many fingers open and so many shut or bent upon the palm, and each of the players, also at the same instant of time, cries out the number made by adding his adversary's open fingers to his own. Thus if A throws out three fingers and B four, and A cries seven, and B eight, or any other number not the true one, A marks a point in the game. If both cry right, then, as a matter of course, there is a tie, and the throw goes for nothing. This to the uninitiated may seem a very childish and a very easy game, but the difficulty of it is far greater than can be well conceived without seeing it played; and success in the game does not depend upon chance, but upon superior quickness of sight. Each player knows the number of fingers he himself throws out, but he must catch at a glance the number thrown out by his adversary, whose movements, like his own, are as quick as lightning, and as he sees he must call out the joint number, his adversary doing the same. This game is mentioned by ancient Roman writers under the name of "micare digitis," and the glittering or flashing of the finger is descriptive of its nature. The fingers are now open, now shut; the hand is now in the air, and now down at the side; and throw follows throw and call follows call as quick as the muscles can move or the tongue speak. The first time I saw the game played, I was amazed at this rapidity and at the loud voices and excited passionate expression of the players, who were

only playing for about a penny-worth of wine. Their eyes flashed and their voices sounded like the simultaneous discharge of a brace of large pistols, it being scarcely possible to my unpractised eye and ear, either to see the number of fingers that were opened or to distinguish by the ear who cried one number or who another. But two bystanders who acted as umpires, and who were almost equally excited, seemed to make these distinctions very well. When the first game was decided, which happened in a very few seconds, the two fellows played another, and getting more and more inflamed, they went on throwing out hands and fingers, and bawling numbers, as Quattro! Sei! Otto! Cinque! Nove! &c., until their voices were hoarse and their arms so tired that they could no longer keep up the rapid movement. As a man gains a point by hitting the right number, he marks it with a finger of his left hand, which is kept motionless, but generally raised above the shoulder. Five points make the game, and when the thumb and four fingers of the left hand are all expanded, then the lucky owner of that hand cuts a caper and sometimes cries Fatto! (Done!) or Guadagnato! (Gained!) or Ho vinto! (I have conquered! Not once, but many a time have I seen the losing party in his mad spite bite the fingers of his right hand until the blood came. But this valuable extremity of the human frame is very liable to bites in the south of Italy; for not only do men bite their thumbs to show their contempt of their enemies in the manner which Shakspeare has recorded in the first scene of 'Romeo and Juliet,' but they also bite and almost gnaw their fingers whenever they are exceedingly vexed and disappointed. I once heard a Capuchin friar in the Mercato, or great market-place of Naples, preach rather a long sermon on the evil practice of finger-biting, which he denounced as heathenish and Saracenic. I have said that five points make the game; but I believe that Morra, like whist, has its longs and shorts, and that in the long game ten points are needed. I have also said that the player throws open so many fingers of his right hand and keeps so many shut; but he may, if he

chooses, throw open all the fingers of his right hand, and this upon occasions he does. It sometimes happens that both players simultaneously throw out five fingers.

The worst of the *Giuoco della Morra* is that it frequently leads to violent quarrelling. Involuntary mistakes will happen, and at times men will try to cheat. Notwithstanding the marvellous quickness of their keen, black, and well-practised eyes, both players and umpires will now and then be at fault, and fierce disputes will arise about the number of glittering fingers which have been thrown. Their ears, too, are occasionally at fault, and then with equal violence they will dispute whether it was the voice of A or the voice of B that cried the right number. Whenever fives were thrown there was a greater chance of fierce disputation, for one of the players was very likely to say that he had not extended his thumb, but had only opened his four fingers; and certainly this thumb point, which we ourselves could never attain to, seemed to be of difficult attainment to "*i piu periti giuocatori*," the most experienced players. Although private assassination and the use of the stiletto and knife had happily declined in Italy, I regret to say that some twenty years ago knives were not unfrequently drawn after a disputed game at *Morra*. On this account attempts have been made at various times to put down the sport; but in our time it flourished greatly and seemed indestructible. It was in vogue among the common people of Rome, and more especially among the *Trasteverini*, or those rough and somewhat turbulent fellows who dwell in the part of the city beyond the Tiber. But the greatest professors and most ardent followers of the game were the *Lazzaroni* and common people of the city of Naples, and the neighbouring towns in the *Terra di Lavoro*. In this the sunniest part of the south there never was fair, festa, saint's day, or other holiday, in which *il Giuoco della Morra* was not played for wine and nuts, melons, sweetmeats, or other refreshments, by thousands; and at these great meetings the air rang and re-echoed with the sharp loud volleyed voices of the players. The confusion and wildness of



Game of Mo ra—From Pinelli.

noise is scarcely to be imagined, except by one who has been at the Festa della Madonna dell' Arco, or the Festa di Piè di Grotta, or some other great Neapolitan festival. In loudness of voice the Neapolitans excel every other people in the world, and they are, perhaps, never so loud-tongued as when under the excitement of this game. If mistakes and quarrels arise when the game is played singly, it may well be imagined that they are more likely to occur when many pairs are playing close together and flashing their fingers and shouting their numbers all at one time. Moreover on those great celebrations more wine than usual was drunk, and in these very excitable people even a slight intoxication by wine was apt to seem very near akin to madness.

I forget what saint's or what Madonna's day it was when, being on my way from Pæstum and Salerno to Naples, I rode into the town of Torre dell' Annunziata, which stands by the sea-shore at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, at a short distance from the ancient city of Pompeii. It is here that the best maccheroni is made: this manufacture gives employment to many persons, and the town of Torre dell' Annunziata was one of the most prosperous and quiet and orderly places in the kingdom. But on this glorious summer evening as I rode into the town, I heard the most savage yelling and saw a great many knives flashing in the air, and fellows running hither and thither and uttering the most fearful exclamations. At the same time some hundreds of women screamed and shrieked and tore their hair or bit their fingers. It looked as if Masaniello, that marvellous fisherman, had come back to life to make a new state revolution: but I very soon ascertained that all this hubbub and drawing of knives had originated in some disputed games at Morra. It was more owing to the screams and tears and entreaties of the women than to any exertion of some half-dozen of gendarmes that an end was put to hostilities; but this desirable event did not happen until several of the knives I had seen in the air had been wetted in human blood. Such was the tragical part of la Morra. The comic part, however, was often

very rich, and the game offered the quiet observer an excellent opportunity for studying expression and gesticulation.

In the summer time there was no going in the evening into any street or lane of the lower part of the city of Naples, without hearing the shouts of fellows that were playing at this ancient and primitive game; but we are told that his present Neapolitan majesty has so far succeeded in his social reforms as to diminish within his capital the amount and frequency of the sport. Madame de Staël and other travellers who wrote at the beginning of the present century, grossly exaggerated the number of the Neapolitan Lazzaroni; yet as late as the year 1827 there were certainly many hundreds of men, bearing the name of Lazzaroni, who had no home or habitation, who slept pell-mell, scores together in the porches of the churches, who had scarcely any clothes beyond a coarse cotton shirt, a pair of tattered trowsers, a red sash round the waist, and a red woollen night-cap, who gained a precarious subsistence by running of errands or doing any chance work, and who would never work at all if they had but money enough to buy food for the day. I am informed by a friend in a recent letter from Naples, that the last of these men have disappeared or are fast disappearing, and that a genuine Lazzaro is now a very rare sight. They were once a power in the state, and had their Capo, or head or chief, who was elected by their own suffrages, and officially recognised by king, church, and government. The Giuoco della Morra may have suffered through this change, although the game was far from being confined to the Lazzaroni. King Ferdinando Nasone—the “*Don Fernando nostro*” of the Lazzari—was said to have played it in perfection in his younger days. The game was played by the ancient Romans, and the memory of it is embalmed in classical poetry.

LANTERNA MAGICA.

IN this instance Bartolommeo Pinelli's design must speak for itself; for we have very little to say about these magic lantern exhibitors. In our time they all came from Upper Italy, and most of them, we believe, from the mountains which surround the Lake of Como or from those which back the Lake of Garda. In form and feature they differed much from the Roman population: they looked more like Savoyards or Swiss than Southern Italians; and, among themselves, they spoke a dialect or patois which was scarcely intelligible to the Romans. Their usual cry was not "Who will see the Magic Lantern?" but, "Who will see the New World—*Chi vuol veder il Mondo Nuovo?*" Like nearly all the rest of Italian showmen, they were great travellers; and, at one time, some of the fraternity were to be found in almost every country in Europe, not even excepting Russia. They have entirely disappeared from our streets, and their nocturnal cry, I believe, is no longer heard anywhere in England; but I can remember the time—at the early part of the present century—when they abounded in London, and were especial favourites with young people. [Many of our young people have now better magic lanterns of their own within doors; and this fact may have driven away the old exhibitors by making their trade unprofitable.] These poor fellows appeared with the long nights of winter, and disappeared at the approach of the short nights of summer: they were most on foot about the merry festive season of Christmas. They generally carried a hand-organ as well as their magical box. Their cry, which still rings musically in our ears, was—"Galante So! Galante So!"—*Galante* being good Italian for gallant, or brave, or *fine*, and *So* being their pronunciation of our English



Lantern Magica.—From Pinelli.

word show. In short, they offered the sight of a fine show in London, as they offered the sight of "the new world" at Rome. The designs on their slips of glass were for the most part exceedingly grotesque; and their own personal appearance was scarcely less so in our young eyes. They were among the first foreigners I ever saw. The bear-wards were scarcely greater favourites with me, or excited more of my childish admiration and wonderment. When, after the lapse of many years, I found some poor fellows of precisely the same sort in the south of Italy, I looked upon them as old friends.

CASSETTA DE' BURATTINI.

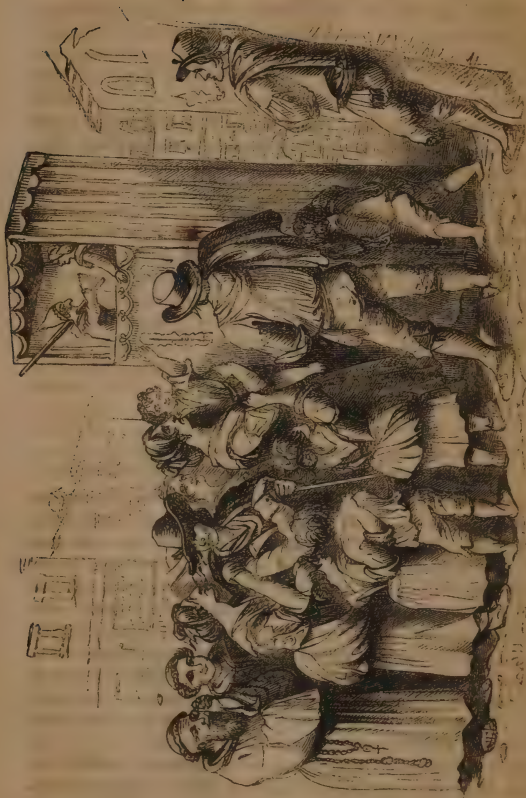
THE box of puppets (Burattini or Fantoccini), or what is, or was, legitimately called a puppet-show (from the French word *poupée*), was more frequently exhibited at Rome and the other cities of Italy than the Magic Lantern. There was more life and variety in it. Some of the burattini played comedy, some tragedy and Scripture pieces, which last bore a close family resemblance to the old Mysteries and Moralities of the English stage. The death of Judas Iscariot was a favourite subject; and particular attention was paid to the hanging scene, and to the last scene of all, where little devils with horns and tails came to clutch the traitor and apostate:—

“Piombò quell' alma a l' infernal riviera,
E si fè gran tremuoto in quel momento.”

“Down went the sinner loaded with his crime—
Down to deep hell; and earthquakes mark'd the time.”

Even with the small box-puppets, or Burattini, playing in the streets by broad daylight, great effects have been produced upon the Roman populace and the peasants of the neighbourhood; and critics have been heard criticising the piece and the tiny puppets with all the gravity and acumen of Partridge in ‘Tom Jones,’ who loved a puppet-show “of all the pastimes upon earth.” Much ingenuity was displayed by the ventriloquist and puppet-mover inside the curtains, who not only moved the various figures and spoke for his personæ dramatis, but, in many cases, invented and extemporized the dialogues which were put into their mouths.

But far grander than these perambulatory exhibitions were the plays performed within doors in Fantoccini-Theatres, or in large rooms converted, for the nonce, into theatres of that sort. There was such a theatre at



Cassetta de' Burattini.

Rome⁵ in our time, though not quite in so flourishing a condition as one at Naples, which stood at the corner of a street, opposite to the Castello Nuovo, on the broad way which leads from the port and that seat of fun and frolic the "Molo" towards the Strada Toledo and the courtly part of the city. In these puppet theatres there was a regular stage, with green baize curtain, footlights, and other accessories. [I was going to say scenes; but as the three unities of action, time, and place were strictly adhered to, there was only one scene used for one play; and as by a little stretch of the imagination this one scene—indistinct by age and long use—might be taken just as well for a church as for a castle, or for a forest as for a cave, or for any other thing in hand, this one scene served for all manner of pieces, from the death of Cain to the exploits of Rinaldo or the misadventures of Policinella.] But here, as was the case with Partridge's friend, the figures were as big as the life, or nearly so, and the whole puppet-show was performed with great regularity and solemnity. Some orators might have studied with advantage the striking attitudes into which these figures were pulled and twitched by the invisible movers of the wires; for here there was more than one Pygmalion to give life, motion, and speech to the burattini; and the machinery was far more complicate and perfect than in the street shows. And some good people there were who thought that the automata were more natural and far more impressive than the living actors and actresses of the penny theatres in their neighbourhood. One old boatman I knew, who came from Sorrento, and who would never attend any other theatre than the puppet-show, to which he went regularly twice or thrice a week; but I believe that this arose out of some religious or moral scruple.

The owner of that puppet-theatre was an ingenious man, and one that had a high notion of the dignity of his profession. When very hard pressed, he could not deny that a representation by living actors and actresses had some advantages over a representation by dolls and puppets. "But," he would say, "there is one decided

advantage which I, as Impresario, have over my rivals: *they* are always tormented by the wants, the caprices, and rebellions of their company; but my little men and women of wood and wire and rags never give me any such trouble: *they* are often made to suffer martyrdoms by the intolerable tyranny of their prima donna, or of their chief tyrant, or primo amoroso; with them it is always happening that this lady has got a cold and won't sing—that this gentleman is in love, or in drink, or put under restraint for debt, and can't act; and then the jars about the distribution of parts, and the deadly jealousy and hatreds that break out, and oftentimes mar the best pieces! but *I* know none of these sore troubles: my company have no caprices, no jealousies, no tyranny, no wants, no colds; they never quarrel with me or among themselves, and, above all things, they never ask me for money:—they are never missing at play or rehearsal; and when they are done playing, *Paffati!* (whack) I throw them into my boxes and lock them up! Ministers of State who manage kingdoms have been put to it how to manage a royal company of actors and actresses. A child might manage my Fantoccini."

In the Elizabethan age, when so much was brought from Italy to grace our literature and improve us in the arts, the Fantoccini, if not then introduced for the first time, appear to have become rather popular in England. It should appear, however, that these first puppets were very diminutive in size, and were exhibited only at fairs and wakes. Bartholomew Fair, in London, was where they shined most. Their plays were then called "motions." Ben Jonson makes his Bartholomew Fair puppet-showman say—"Oh! the motions that I, Lanthorn Leatherhead, have given light to in my time, since my master Pod died! Jerusalem was a stately thing, and so was Nineveh, and the city of Norwich . . . But the Gunpowder Plot,—there was a get-penny!"* The same great personage says—"Your home-born subjects prove ever the best, they are so easy and

* 'Bartholomew Fair.'

familiar: they put too much learning in their things now-a-days!" Yet it should seem that Eastern and Scriptural subjects formed by far the greater part of the stock of these puppet plays. In another place Ben Jonson names one puppet play which enjoyed a long run, and which he calls "A new motion of the City of Nineveh, with Jonas and the Whale."* These tiny puppets evidently aspired to no higher fame than such as could be gotten from children and the poorer people. But the bigger puppets, the *Fantoccini*, that were as large as life, or nearly so (like those of our Neapolitan manager), were destined to obtain the admiration of the grown-up fashionable world, and of full-grown royalty itself.

Some Italian speculators of this last kind found their way to England in the time of Charles II. In the summer of 1662 Samuel Pepys saw the puppet plays in Covent Garden; and in the autumn of that year they were exhibited before King Charles and the court in the palace of Whitehall. It was nearly at the same time that women were first introduced upon the English stage to perform the female parts, which had hitherto been done by boys and young men, the latter having always been clean shaved before they put on the dress of *Desdemona* or *Ophelia*, or of such other delicate part as they might have to play. But this nearer approach to real life did not affect the popularity of the wooden actors. The Italian puppet-shows took amazingly, and continued for many years to be frequented by the fashionable world, and a large part of town. With many these shows even rivalled the Italian opera of that day; and Signor Nicolini Grimaldi, that admirable Neapolitan singer and actor, was often deserted for his wooden countryman *Policinella* and the other puppets that played tragedy and comedy.

At this time, or early in the eighteenth century, the puppet-show manager was not an Italian, but a native of this island, named Powell, who has been handed down

* 'Every Man out of his Humour.'

to the admiration of posterity in the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator,' and whose fame has been preserved in other enduring records. This Powell, it appears, exhibited alternately in Covent Garden, London, and at a theatre of his own in the gay city of Bath. Steele and Addison—for both these eminent writers had a hand in the papers about Powell in the 'Tatler'—are supposed to have typified, by the character and doings of the puppet-showman and his rivals, a fierce literary controversy between Hoadley and Blackhall, Bishop of Exeter; but, read in their obvious sense, their descriptions are very amusing. All the women, they say, are gadding after the puppet-show, and Mr. Powell, speaking for his Punch, is bespattering people of honour, and saying many things which ought not to be said. "I am credibly informed," says Steele, "that he makes a profane lewd jester, whom he calls Punch, speak to the dishonour of Isaac Bickerstaff with a great familiarity. . . . I think I need not say much to convince all the world that this Mr. Powell, for that is his name, is a pragmatistical and vain person. . . . But I would have him to know that I can look beyond his wires, and know very well the whole trick of his art; and that it is only by these wires that the eye of the spectator is cheated, and hindered from seeing that there is a thread in one of Punch's chops, which draws it up and lets it fall at the discretion of the said Powell, who stands behind and plays him, and makes him speak saucily of his betters." In another place the 'Tatler' speaks out still more plainly.—"Mr. Powell," says the fictitious Bickerstaff, "was so disingenuous as to make one of his puppets (*I wish I knew which of them it was*) declare, by way of prologue, that one Isaac Bickerstaff, a pretended esquire, had written a scurrilous piece to the dishonour of that rank of men. . . . I do therefore solemnly declare, notwithstanding that I am a great lover of art and ingenuity, that if I hear he opens any of his people's mouths against me, I shall not fail to write a critique upon his whole performance; for I must confess, that I have naturally so strong a desire of praise,

that I cannot bear reproach, though from a piece of timber. As for Punch, who takes all opportunity of bespattering me, I know very well his origin, and have been assured by the joiner who put him together that he was long in dispute with himself whether he should turn him into several pegs and utensils, or make him the man he is. The same person confessed to me that he had once actually laid aside his head for a nut-cracker. As for his scolding wife, however she may value herself at present, it is very well known that she is but a piece of crab-tree. This artificer further whispered in my ear, that all his courtiers and nobles were taken out of a quickset hedge not far from Islington; and that Dr. Faustus himself, who is now so great a conjurer, is supposed to have learned his whole art from an old woman in that neighbourhood, whom he long served in the figure of a broomstick."

'This Powell the puppet-showman, and his drama of 'Dr. Faustus,' which is said to have been performed to crowded houses throughout two seasons, to the utter neglect of good plays and living players, did not escape the keen picture-satire of Hogarth. In one of his plates a great crowd is seen rushing into a doorway, over which Punch or a harlequin is pointing to the inscription, "Dr. Faustus is here;" behind the crowd a woman is wheeling a barrow and crying about as waste paper the works of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Otway, Dryden, Congreve, &c., with which the said wheelbarrow is filled. In this picture Powell and his puppets appear as rivals to that famous conjuror, mountebank, and sleight-of-hand man, Faux or Fawkes, who has taken post on the opposite side of the way, and is also drawing a crowd to see his performances; but it should seem that these two great luminaries sometimes shined in conjunction, and that the conjurer and the puppet-showman were occasionally close allies. In an advertisement and puff which has scarcely been surpassed even in the puffing age we live in, it is said—"Whereas the town hath been lately alarmed, that the famous Fawkes was *robbed and murdered*, returning from per-

forming at the *Duchess of Buckingham's house at Chelsea*; which report being raised and printed by a person to gain money to himself, and prejudice the above-mentioned Mr. Fawkes, whose unparalleled performance has gained him so much applause from the greatest of quality, and most curious observers; we think, both in justice to the injured gentleman and for the satisfaction of his admirers, that we cannot please our readers better than to acquaint them he is alive, and will not only perform his usual surprising dexterity of hand, posture-master, and musical clock, but, for the greater diversion of the quality and gentry, has agreed with the famous Powell, of Bath, for the season, who has the largest, richest, and most natural figures and finest machines in England, and whose former performances in Covent Garden were so engaging to the town as to gain the approbation of the best judges, to show his puppet plays along with him, beginning at the Christmas holidays next, at the Old Tennis Court, in James's Street, near the Haymarket." At one time (in the days of good Queen Anne) Powell, acting for himself and by himself, placed his show under the piazzas of Covent Garden. The ancient under-sexton and pew-opener of St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, complained to the 'Spectator' that he found his congregation now take the warning of the church bell, which he had daily rung for twenty years, for morning and evening prayer, as a summons to Powell's puppet-show under the piazzas, instead of a summons to church. "I have," says the poor bellman, "placed my son at the piazzas, to acquaint the ladies that the bell rings for church, and that it stands on the other side of the Garden, but they only laugh at the child. I desire you would lay this letter before all the world, that I may not be made such a tool for the future, and that Punchinello may choose hours less canonical. As things are now, Mr. Powell has a full congregation, while we have a very thin house."

Powell, as has been observed, was an innovator;* for

* 'London.' Edited by Charles Knight.

while his contemporary puppet-show managers performed the 'Old Creation of the World' and 'Noah's Flood,' after the fashion of the ancient mysteries and moralities, Powell introduced a pig to dance a minuet with Punch.* 'Whittington and his Cat,' as played by Powell's puppets, rivalled the popularity of the opera of 'Rinaldo and Armida,' as played and sung by flesh and blood Italians in the Haymarket.† Powell was deformed and a cripple, but he made hay while the sun shone, and grew rich by exhibiting his puppet-shows before that taste passed away. His friend, and some time coadjutor, Mr. Fawkes, the conjurer, also made a large fortune. Our conjurers and showmen are not so fortunate and so worldly wise now-a-days; but other exhibitors, and impostors of a much less innocent and infinitely less amusing kind, still grow rich upon the bad taste and credulity of the times.

After a reign longer than that of most sovereigns, Punch was compelled to abdicate the realms of Covent Garden and St. James's, and all the puppets were fain to retreat to obscurer regions. The grown-up people of quality had renounced their allegiance, and after this revolution the puppet-show (however big the figures might be) was considered as an amusement fit for none but children and poor people. It, however, took a long time to put down the puppet-theatres altogether. In the early part of the present century there was a theatre of the kind in the vicinity of Fleet Street,‡ and another in some street or lane in the heart of the city. I well remember seeing 'Romeo and Juliet' played at one of these houses, to the evident delight of an audience which certainly did not consist entirely of children. But now the only remnant of these glories is to be found in the Punch of the streets, and the little puppets that dance in the streets upon a board, or that exhibit their pleasant antics in the booth of some country fair. Partridge's

* 'Spectator.'

† Id.

‡ In the days of Ben Jonson, the place where the Fantoccini were exhibited daily was by Fleet Bridge.

friend, the puppet-showman, who was all for the grand and serious, boasted that he had thrown out Punch and his wife Joan, and all such idle trumpery, together with "a great deal of low stuff that did very well to make folks laugh, but was never calculated to improve the morals of young people, which (he continued) certainly ought to be principally aimed at in every puppet-show." "I would by no means degrade the ingenuity of your profession," answered Jones, "but I should have been glad to have seen my old acquaintance, Master Punch, for all that; and so far from improving, I think that by leaving out him and his merry wife Joan you have spoiled your puppet-show." But Master Punch and Mistress Joan, or Judy, could not be left out long: the sympathies of the world were with them, and so they were brought back, and made to survive all the fine lords, kings, kaisers, queens, empresses, heroes, and patriarchs that ever figured in the puppet-shows; and, indeed (the dancing-dolls being so insignificant), Punch may now be considered not only as the only genuine representative which remains of that old stage, but also as the only living representative of the puppet world. The case is somewhat different in Italy, and in the South of France, for there Fantoccini theatres remain, and other dramas are played in the streets besides that of Punch and Judy; yet, even there, Punch indisputably takes the foremost rank; nay, it has been considered that he has a whole kingdom—Naples, the only kingdom in the Peninsula; as the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom of the Emperor of Austria is but a fiction—in allegiance to him. But Punch, under the various phases of his existence, in Italy and in the other parts of the wide world, in most of which he is found under some alias or other, is so grand a subject, that I must leave the discussion of it for another paper.

POLICINELLA—PUNCH.

PUNCH is a universality, and of a remote and indisputable antiquity. He is found in so many countries and at such distant periods of time, that it is impossible to say where or when he had his origin. He is as popular in Egypt and Syria and Turkey as ever he was in London or Naples. Under the name of Karaguse, or Black-Snout, he has amused and edified the grave, bearded citizens of Cairo and Constantinople for many an age. In Asia Minor I once travelled in company with him across Mount Sipylus, where Niobe turned to stone; and afterwards I heard his merry voice ringing through the ancient city of Magnesia. Some living traces of him have been found in Nubia, and in other countries far above the cataracts of the Nile; while types or symbols of him have, according to some interpreters, been discovered among the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians. He was popular at Algiers ages before the French went to conquer that country. The children of the wandering Arabs of the desert know him and cherish him. He is quite at home among the lively Persians, and beyond the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, Karaguse, or Black-Snout, is found slightly travestied in Hindustan, Siam and Pegu, Ava and Cochin-China, China Proper and Japan. The Tartars behind the great wall of China are not unacquainted with him, nor are the Kamtchatkans. He has recently been discovered leading an uncomfortable sort of existence among some of the Affghan tribes, to whom no doubt he has been introduced by the Persians.

Some of the learned have opined that Punch and the whole family of Burattini, or puppets, were originally introduced into Europe from the East at the time of the

Crusades ; but their hypothesis seems to be deficient in any solid foundation of fact. Others, perplexed with the difficulty of his genealogy, have supposed that Punch must have had several fathers, or several distinct origins at different times, and in different parts of the world ; and as Punch is made up of the stuff which is found wherever man is, this seems to be a good theory. Yet to treat of him only in his European existence, he is rather a mysterious character. Capponi and other erudite Italian authors consider him as a lineal representative of the Atellan farcers, who amused the people of Campania and the citizens of Rome as far back as the time of the Tarquins. These Atellan farcers were Oscans, and took their name from the town of Atella, which stood where the village of Sant' Elpidio now stands, about two miles to the south-east of the modern town of Aversa, and only some six or seven miles from the city of Naples, the head-quarters of Policinella. The Italian antiquaries found a convincing resemblance between Policinella's mask and a little figure in bronze with a beak or chicken nose to its face, which was discovered at Rome ; and from this chicken nose they derive Punch's Neapolitan name, *Pullus* signifying a chicken, *Pullicinus* a little chicken, &c. Another bronze figure with the same nose or beak was discovered a few years ago among the bronzes dug out of Herculaneum ; and, in the ancient guard-room at Pompeii, (before parts of the stucco were broken and purloined by some shameless travellers), there was a figure drawn upon the wall by some idle Roman soldier, which closely resembled the Neapolitan Punch, not only in feature but also in costume and gesture : and this rude but no doubt faithful delineation had been buried for sixteen centuries under the scorïæ, pumice, ashes, and cinders of Mount Vesuvius before it was restored to light.

The Attellanæ Fabulæ, or Ludi Osci (the Atellan or Oscan farces), were anterior to any Roman or Italian stage. They were played upon planks and tressels—their theatre not being unlike that of the modern Ciarlatano, or mountebank. The actors spoke their own Oscan dia-

lect, even as Policinella always speaks the Neapolitan dialect. One of their never-failing characters was Macchus, a roguish clown or buffoon, who made merry with everybody and everything, and who is believed to have worn a mask exactly like that of the modern Neapolitan Punch. But there were indisputably other and better family resemblances and points in which the most ancient Oscan Macchus claims affinity with the *true* Punch of all ages and countries (excepting only the English Punch when engaged in his conjugal differences).

The old Oscan had a natural elegance and an unfathomable store of good nature; he had no envy or malice, he loved those he made sport of, and in his most satirical allusions his object was to excite joyous and innocent laughter, and not to rouse feelings of hatred or contempt. Hence, in the most high and palmy state of Rome, he and his Oscan farces were admired by all classes of the community. Livy laid down the pen of history to listen to his drollery; Cicero paused to hear him as he went to or returned from the Forum; and critics of refined taste applauded his jests: nay, Sylla, or Sulla, that mighty and terrible dictator, was said at one time of his life to have written Atellan farces for the Oscan Punch to play in. Throughout the period of the Empire, or at least from the time of the Emperor Augustus down to that of the last of the Cæsars, these *Ludi Osci* enjoyed an undisturbed popularity. Like other good things they were eclipsed or trodden under foot in the anarchy and barbarism which followed. Some think that they were entirely destroyed, together with every memory of their having once existed; but this is at the least problematical. We rather lean to the opinion of those who maintain that, like the Delhi Lama in Thibet, Punch within the limits of Naples was the great 'Undying One.' We look upon the story told by the learned and acute Galiani, in his *Vocabulary of the Neapolitan dialect*, as upon a mere revival. The story goes thus:—Once upon a time (it was a very long time ago) a company of strolling comedians chanced to arrive at the

town of Acerra, near the city of Naples, in the season of vintage. At that merry season, even more than in Carnival time, the country people are allowed all the liberty and licence of the ancient Saturnalia; they daub and stain themselves with the wine-lees, put wreaths or garlands upon their heads, dress up a young man as Bacchus, and an old one as Silenus, give full play to their lungs and tongues, and play nearly all the Pagan pranks that were performed by their ancestors or predecessors in the soil two thousand years ago at the same joyous season of the year. Whomsoever they see they accost with songs and jests. Judge, therefore, how the vintagers gathered round the strolling players with their jokes and vociferations. The universal rule is that everybody must either pay a fine or cap the jests. The comedians, being jest-makers by profession, and poor by destiny, tried the latter course, but were beaten and silenced. One of the vintagers, called Puccio d'Aniello, or Puccio the son of Aniello, remarkable for a very queer nose, and for an appearance altogether grotesque, was the most forward and witty of all his band, and it was his torrent of drollery and fancy that drove the poor players out of the field. Reflecting on this occurrence professionally (so goes Galiani's story), the comedians thought that a character like that of their antagonist Puccio d'Aniello might prove very attractive on the stage; and going back to the vintager they proposed an engagement to him which he accepted. The engagement proved profitable to both parties; and wherever they went and acted, whether in the capital or in provincial towns, Puccio d'Aniello drew crowded houses. After some years Puccio died, but his place was presently filled by a competent and every way worthy successor, who assumed his name liquified into Polecenella (the strictly correct designation in the Neapolitan dialect), and also his manner and costume; and not having the same natural nose, he perpetuated that feature of the facetious vintager by wearing a mask for the upper part of his face, upon which Puccio's nose was lively represented. By degrees,

personifications of the original Puccio d'Aniello were multiplied all over the kingdom ; and the name and character of Polecenella became immortal.

This is the whole of Galiani's story ; and a very good story it is. But the acute reader will see and bear in mind that Acerra, the named birth-place of Puccio, lies in the Oscan territory, and a very little way from Atella, the native home of Macchus and the Ludi Osci. He will also remember the antique bronze figures with their typical noses, and the delineation on the wall of the guard-house at Pompeii, as well as the good etymology which derives the name from the hooked nose or beak. Moreover it remains to be mentioned that though Policinellas were multiplied after the demise of Puccio d'Aniello, and have been multiplied in all succeeding ages, there has never been more than one true and real Policinella living at any one given time, while there has never been any time since the obscuration of Puccio without its one real and super-excellent Policinella. The Neapolitans no more expect two Policinellas at a time than they expect two suns or two moons. Their one Punch has his temple and shrine in the capital : the rest that flit about in the provinces are pseudo-Punches, with nothing of the character save the mask and dress. We say little : we never try to broach a theory or to build up a system : but we think of the Delhi Lama in Thibet who was born again young as soon as he died old, and of the perpetual re-juvenescence of Punch in this Oscan corner of the kingdom of Naples ; and then,—but a word to the wise is enough.

During our long stay at Naples we had *la felicità di conoscere*—the happiness of knowing—two Policinellas. The first was so admirable, so killingly droll, that we could not hope to see his loss supplied ; but no sooner had he sickened and died than another Policinella sprung up, ready and perfect, and so like his predecessor that he might have passed for him but for the misfortune and blemish of his having only one eye. We knew this second Punch off the stage as well as on it. The poor fellow could scarcely read, and yet his mind was a well

spring of wit and fun, and of the raciest and richest humour. Much of what he said on the stage was his own invention or composition, and it very often came from him as an impromptu. He had always something to say on the event or predominant folly of the day, and most facetiously did he say it, in his broad open-mouthed Neapolitan dialect, which we take to be the most happy of all vehicles for the conveyance of humour, and perhaps also of wit. One of the pieces in which he was very great was entitled 'Le Novanta-Nove Disgrazie di Polecenella,' or 'The Ninety-nine Misfortunes or Mishaps of Punch.' He was also very eminent in 'l'Accademia de' Poeti,' or the 'Academy or Club of Poets,' where he revelled in sports and jests at the expense of the poetasters and sonneteers of the day, who, like the Roman verse-makers in Horace's time, had an inveterate habit of stopping their acquaintances in the streets and public places, and there holding them fast while they recited with loud voice and passionate gesticulations their last compositions.

All these plays or farces were from beginning to end in the Neapolitan dialect; the drollest of the standing characters next to Punch being *Il Biscegliese*, or *Man of Bisceglia*, and *Il Tartaglione*, or the *Stutterer*. The *Biscegliese*, who was a true comic genius, and a native of Bisceglia in the province of Apulia, where the modification of the national vernacular is exceedingly droll, represented a whole class, being that of the Apulian townspeople. The stammerer or stutterer was always attired as a provincial lawyer or notary, and his fun consisted chiefly in the strange way in which he dislocated his words and sentences. As *Policinella* was always *Policinella*, so was the *Biscegliese* always the *Biscegliese*, and the *Tartaglione* the *Tartaglione*. They never played any other parts; but the pieces in which these standing characters were introduced varied in plots and incidents, and while some of them were new, others boasted a very respectable antiquity.

This truly national theatre was situated not far from the great theatre of San Carlo (the most extensive and,

on the whole, most splendid opera-house in Europe), on one side of the Largo del Castello, or Castle-square: it was called San Carlino, or little San Carlo; and little it was, and far from being splendid in its appointments and accessories. The boxes were on a level with the street or square, but to get to the pit you had to descend some thirty feet into the bowels of the earth, and to dive down a steep staircase not unlike that by which Roderick Random and his faithful Strap dived for their dinner. The price paid for admission was very small; I think it was about a shilling for a seat in the boxes, and about sixpence for a seat in the pit. Everywhere there is a "fashionable world," and a set of superfine people who deprive themselves of much racy and innocent amusement from a notion that it is not *genteel*. San Carlino was rarely visited except by the second and third rate classes of burgesses, for the native fashionables considered it as "low," and very few foreigners ever acquired a sufficient knowledge of the patois or dialect to enjoy and fully understand these rich Neapolitan farces, and the perennial wit and humour of our friend Punch. But before I quitted Naples this ridiculous prejudice seemed to be on the decline, for a few young men of family, who had wit as well as high birth, had appreciated the genius of that living Policinella, and had made the little cellar almost fashionable. For myself, I very often strolled away from the gorgeous and fine and thoroughly artificial Opera-house, to enjoy a little homely nature and drollery in San Carlino, where I have laughed more than I shall ever laugh again.

As in every other theatre in the city, there was always present a commissary of police, to preserve order and decorum, and check any too free use of the tongue on the stage. This representative of the laws and of majesty itself, wore a blue court-cut coat embroidered with silver; he sat in what we call a stage-box, on a high-backed chair, covered with faded crimson velvet; and behind his back there were two large wax candles and the royal arms of the Two Sicilies painted upon a bit of board. But not all this official splendour could

repress the hilarity or stifle the roguish impromptus of friend Punch; and we have at times seen the starch-visaged commissary, after some vain attempts to maintain his dignity, hold both his sides, and join in the universal roar of laughter: and this too even when Signor Policinella had gone beyond bounds and handled matters strictly tabooed.

What Forsyth said of the Molo and the Marionettes, and out-door Punch, might be more correctly applied to San Carlino:—"This is a theatre where any stranger may study for nothing the manners of the people. At the theatre of San Carlo the mind, as well as the man, seems parted off from its fellows in an elbow-chair. There all is regulation and silence: no applause, no censure, no object worthy of attention except the court and the fiddle. There the drama—but what is a drama in Naples without Punch? or what is Punch out of Naples? Here, in his native tongue, and among his own countrymen, Punch is a person of real power: he dresses up and retails all the drolleries of the day; he is the channel and sometimes the source of the passing opinions; he can inflict ridicule, he could gain a mob, or keep the whole kingdom in good humour. Such was De Fiori, the Aristophanes of his nation, immortal in buffoonery."*

How it fares with the little theatre of San Carlino and the in-door Punch I know not; but I have received the mournful intelligence that the out-of-door Punch and the Burattini in general have been suffering a worse than heathen persecution at the hands of the present king and government; that povero Policinella is banished from his home and country, and that in consequence of these and similar improvements all life and brio are vanishing from the streets of Naples. It is some comfort to know that Punch at the same time is becoming more popular at Paris than ever he was before.

* Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters, during an excursion in Italy, in the years 1802 and 1803.

WANDERING ITALIANS.

THE attention of most of our readers must have been excited by the poor Italian boys that frequent our streets, selling images, playing organs, or exhibiting monkeys, land tortoises, and white mice. This numerous class is found, and generally in greater numbers than with us, in France, in Germany, even in Russia, and in other continental countries. They are not less remarkable on account of their dark expressive countenances, and picturesque appearance, than from their quiet, inoffensive conduct. It is very rare to find in any one of the many countries to which these wanderers repair, a single proof of a crime or serious offence of any kind committed by them. This is a circumstance the more to be wondered at, as they for the most part leave their homes in very tender years, and are frequently exposed to the privations and temptations of extreme poverty. Those among them who are venders of images, by selling for a few pence the plaster busts of great men and casts from ancient works of art, may pretend to the dignity of traders, and even have the merit of improving and propagating a taste for the fine arts; while those who exhibit the different animals may awaken an interest for natural history, by showing the docility of those creatures who have learnt obedience to man. As a body, if they are to be held as vagrants, they must be considered as the most inoffensive and amusing of vagrants.

The venders of images come almost without an exception from the territory of Lucca, in Tuscany, not many miles from Florence. The way in which their companies are formed is this:—One, or sometimes two men, who possess the art of casting figures in moulds, propose a campaign; and having collected a number of poor boys,

of whom they become the captains, leave their native valley and cross the Apennines and the Alps, marching in a little corps of ten, twelve, or fifteen. In my peripatetic days I once walked over the Alps by the road of Mount Cenis, with a company of this sort, from whose chief I learned many particulars as to the modes of their proceeding. Their moulds or forms, with a few tools, had been dispatched before them by the waggon to Chambery, the capital city of Savoy, where they proposed to make their first sojourn. They find the plaster and other simple materials requisite for the formation of their figures, in nearly every large town to which they go; and they never fix their quarters for any length of time, except in large towns. On arriving, therefore, at Chambery, the artist, or the principal of this company, having received his moulds, would set to work, despatching the boys who were with him through the city and the little towns and villages in the neighbourhood, to sell the figures which he could rapidly make. When the distance permitted, these boys would return at night with the fruits of the day's sale to their master, who lodged and fed them; but it would often happen, when they took a wider range among the mountains and valleys of Savoy, that they would be absent for several days, under which circumstances they would themselves purchase their cheap food and shelter out of the money they might obtain for the goods they disposed of. When the market became languid in and about Chambery, the master would pack off his moulds and tools for Geneva, and follow them on foot with his little troop, each of whom would carry some few figures to sell at the towns and villages on the road to that city. At Geneva, he would do as he had done at Chambery; and when that neighbourhood was supposed to be supplied, he would transfer himself and his assistants in the same way to some other place. About nine months after passing the Alps with him, I found my old fellow-traveller, the image-maker, at Fontainebleau, in the forest of that name. He was busily at work, with only two boys in the town with him; the rest being scattered about the country. By this time he had

crossed the Jura mountains, traversed the great part of France, and was on the point of going to Paris, whence he intended to work his way, by Amiens and Calais, to England, where he promised himself a golden harvest. His brother, who had been absent from home several years, was, with a corps similarly constituted, exploring the less populous provinces of Russia. This man himself had already been into Germany as far as Leipsic. He was intelligent, industrious in his way, exceedingly sober, and well-behaved,* and spoke very good Italian, as indeed did all his boys, being Tuscans born. The image-venders, indeed, are, as we had said, nearly without an exception, natives of Tuscany, where even the poorest of the people speak a graceful and pure language. The rest of the wandering Italians use different *patois*, or dialects, according to the places from which they come, and are scarcely to be understood by the Italian scholar who has not lived among them.

After the Lucchesi, or natives of Lucca, these itinerants may be classed generally under two heads—mountaineers from the Apennines, and mountaineers from the Italian ridges and valleys of the Alps. Lower Italy, or the kingdom of Naples, the states of Rome, and those of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, rarely send forth any of these emigrants; but we find these troops formed in great numbers, going on towards Lombardy, in the states of Parma. A great part of this territory, which is now allotted to Maria Louisa, the widow of Napoleon Bonaparte, is occupied by the rude Apennines, where the poverty of the soil and the severity of the climate are such as are hardly expected to exist in Italy. On the

* During the jealousies and deadly hatred that distracted Italy in the middle ages, and prepared the servitude and misery of that beautiful country, the Lucchesi obtained a very bad name; and it is curious to observe how long the recollection of this has lasted among the people, for to this day, a man of Lucca, if asked where he comes from, always replies, “Vi sono de’ buoni, e de’ cattivi dappertutto—sono Lucchese per servirla,” or “There are good and bad people everywhere. I am a Lucchese at your service!”

northern side of these mountains the corn, scantily sown, is not ripe till September; and frequently, even when it has escaped the effect of the heavy rains and torrents, which occasionally wash away the soil and the ridges, and walls which they are obliged to build on the declivities to retain it, the grain never comes to healthful maturity. In some seasons the rush of water down the precipitous sides of these mountains is so tremendous that the terraces are destroyed and the soil washed away to the bare rock. At other times hurricanes whirl the earth and its produce in the air. In both cases, years of labour and ingenuity, to render their mountainous territory susceptible of cultivation, are destroyed, and families and whole districts are reduced to extreme misery. The other scanty resources of these poor peasants of the Apennines are the produce of chesnuts, and the cutting of wood, which, as they have no roads to transport it by, is employed almost wholly for purposes of fuel and charcoal. Some favoured individuals possess a few flocks of sheep in the lower, and of goats in the upper, parts of the mountains.

To procure, therefore, that subsistence which their own country does not afford, these people emigrate in various directions, and in the exercise of various callings. The emigrations of most of them are very temporary; and it may be mentioned here, that, rude as is their home, even those who emigrate for longer periods of time invariably propose to return to it, as soon as they shall have made some money. A curious fact is, that each district has, and has had for many generations, its peculiar professions and line of emigration, never interfering with those of another district. From the wild tract of country (a length of nearly thirty English miles), which from the town of Berceto extends along the ridge of the Apennines to the western side of the Duchy of Modena, the male population go to the island of Corsica, where they employ themselves as agricultural labourers and wood-cutters. On account of the distance some of these stay away two or three years at a time. In the tract immediately beneath this, the men repair every

year to labour in the corn-fields in the unhealthy and almost pestilential *maremme*, or marshes of Tuscany, whence many of them are sure to return with *mal-aria* fevers. The sobriety, the abstemiousness of these men—the privations to which they submit to save a little money—the *wonderfully little* on which they live, fill an Englishman with astonishment. Their sole object is to return home with their savings; to add to the sum of which, both those from Corsica and those from Tuscany occasionally addict themselves to a little sly or contraband trade. The articles they import are chiefly *salt* and *gunpowder*—articles which the petty governments of Italy have, in their wisdom, thought fit to monopolize. The articles which they export into Tuscany are chiefly rags for the manufacture of paper, which export, by the same wisdom, the government of Parma prohibits or loads with tremendous duties, in order to encourage the paper manufactories of its own states. In these smuggling operations, whose full success can only give them each a few shillings of profit, the poor peasants undergo the greatest hardships and dangers; for to avoid the lines of frontiers and custom-houses, and all those who might interfere with their trade, they gain their homes by traversing the wild and deep ravines, and the loftiest and least frequented crests of the Apennines, where they are occasionally buried in the snow or carried away by the whirlwind, and still more frequently detained whole days in some savage, isolated spot by the inclemencies of the climate.

The districts of Borgo Val di Taro, the villages of Bardi, Compiano, Bedonia, &c. still in the Duchy of Parma, and on the Apennines between Parma and Genoa, have considerably more resources and more productive lands than those we have described. Here indeed we find well cultivated farms, rich pastures, and an appearance of comparative prosperity; but still the means are insufficient to the support of the population; they consequently emigrate in great numbers. These districts, indeed, furnish many of those wandering Italian

boys that we see about our streets, to whom we particularly alluded at the opening of this little account.

Some of those who wander from home with animals engage themselves in England and other countries, in the service of the proprietors of menageries. One of the sufferers from the fury of the celebrated elephant in Exeter 'Change a few years ago, was a native of Compiano, who had his ribs broken by the trunk of the maddened quadruped. But by far the greatest number in this profession perambulate on their own account, with monkeys, dogs, bears, camels, and hyænas. Those of them who come to England generally confine themselves to monkeys, probably on account of the difficulty and expense of the voyage. The extreme poverty in which these people are when they prepare for a first emigration, puts it out of their power to provide these animals themselves. There are, therefore, certain men who have made money in the calling, and no longer wander themselves, whom they call *proveditori* or providers, and these sell, or let out to them on certain conditions, the creatures which the emigrants are in need of. And here also frequently occurs a curious co-operation of capital and labour; four of these poor fellows will buy one bear among them, and hold the property on the tenure of what they call "a paw a-piece," (*una zampa per uno*). Two of them leading it from one country to another, and showing it together, divide the profits equally, and then save or remit given proportions of the profits to the two proprietors at home. One of their *proveditori*, a certain Rossi, of Compiano, is now a man of much substance, with considerable landed property in the Apennines. He is the greatest speculator in his line, frequently importing his animals direct from Africa. On the Continent, a few years since, if you asked any of these itinerants whence they came, and who had provided them, you were pretty sure to be told that they were Rossi of Compiano's men. In their native mountains, if you inquire of their families or their wives, whom they always leave at home, where an absent relative or husband is, the

almost infallible answer is, in their dialect, "E peò mondo co à commedia," in good Italian, "E pel mondo con la commedia," or in English, "He is wandering about the world with *the comedy*." These simple people give the elevated name of *comedy* to the gambols of monkeys and the dancing of bears. Besides dancing-bears, these itinerants from Compiano, Bedonia, and Bardi had dancing cocks, which we do not remember ever to have seen with them in England, and of late years, only rarely with them on the Continent. The way in which they taught this courageous bird to dance was this: they took a flag-stone surrounded by high rims of stone or clay, or a large round earthen pan with a flat bottom, and placed it over a small slow fire; then, having cut or secured the cock's wings, and protected his feet and spurs by a piece of cloth on either leg, they put him down on the confined arena from which he could not escape, and while one man played a lively tune on some instrument, another blew the fire under the pan or stone. As soon as the cock felt the heat under his feet, he naturally began to lift them up; and this he did quicker and quicker as the heat increased, until the rapidity of their motion represented a dance. It was not necessary often to repeat the cruel lesson, for after two or three rehearsals of this sort, the cock, wherever he might be placed, would begin to lift up his legs or dance as soon as the music, which had formerly been an accompaniment to his sufferings, began to play. The more troublesome or more dangerous bear received his rudiments in much the same manner. His fore-legs were left in their natural state, and his hind ones were protected by a sort of leather boot or sandal. He was then put upon a heated flag-stone, when he naturally raised his fore-paws in the air, and then moved his hind-legs up and down to avoid the heat.

The most interesting trait in the character of these inoffensive wanderers is their never-failing attachment to their mountain homes. Go where they will, let them be as fortunate as they may be, they rarely or never think of a permanent settlement, but look back to Italy

and the Apennines as the place of their rest. The object of all their toils and travels, their great and their sole ambition, is to become the owners of a house and a little bit of land, if not on the precise spot, at least in the immediate neighbourhood of the villages in the mountains where they were born. In the natural course of things, many never attain the desired goal; some of the wanderers fall far from home, victims to the severity of the climate, as in Russia, or to its unhealthiness in other places; some are unfortunate in their animals, or in the tracts of country they may have chosen to explore; some, though very few, are improvident, and die abroad in wretchedness, or return home as indigent as they first set forth. But still, there are continual instances, after years of wandering, of these men returning to their native villages in the possession of a comfortable independence.



Portrait of an Italian exhibiting in London.

It may be conceived, that from the poverty of the country and their humble notions and way of living, a small sum of money will suffice for this independence.

The first thing they do under these fortunate circumstances is to purchase a piece of ground where they erect a little house; and the few foreign travellers who have visited this particular mountainous district must have observed and admired that their houses are built in a better style than the rugged cottages of their neighbours, and that notions of snugness, domestic comfort, and cleanliness have been imitated from England, Germany, and other distant countries in which the poor itinerants have lived. The returned wanderers become the oracles of their neighbourhood. They can talk of foreign countries, and cities, and habits of life, and relate all the adventures they encountered on their travels. The fame and the magnificence of London, and much that is glorious and good in us as a nation, as far as it could impress the limited, uncultivated faculties of such persons, have been thus sounded from one end to the other of the mountains in the Duchy of Parma.

The emigrants from the North of Italy are far more numerous, and generally engaged in more respectable or more important pursuits, than the poor peasants of the Apennines.

These Northern Italians come principally, as we have mentioned, from the lakes of Upper Italy, and the valleys and declivities of the Alps. The same curious practice obtains here as in the Apennines, and on a larger scale—that is, each district embraces a particular calling, and never interferes with that of its neighbours. For generation after generation, one place has sent forth venders of barometers, &c.; another place, innkeepers and servants for inns; another, stone-cutters; another, house-painters and whitewashers; another, masons and architects, and so on. We will begin with those from the lake of Como, the class of emigrants most frequently found in England, and, perhaps, the most intellectual and important of the whole.

The large and beautiful lake of Como is principally fed by the waters and melting snow of the neighbouring Alps, and is almost entirely surrounded by lofty and very steep mountains that are picturesque to the eye rather

than productive to the poor inhabitants. In their best parts, the superior region of these mountains offers woods and pastures, the middle region an abundance of chesnut trees, and the lower declivities bear vines, mulberry-trees, a few olives, and vegetables. Corn is grown in some places, and rye in others; but frequently under circumstances of great difficulty, requiring infinite labour and ingenuity. The bear, the wolf, the chamois, the white hare, the marmot, and other wild animals, are found on these mountains; whose sides, like those of the Apennines, are frequently swept by tremendous hurricanes, which throw down the walls built to retain the soil, carry away the earth and its produce, and destroy the labour of years. Hard, however, as is the struggle of man with nature, population has gone on increasing in these parts, and the number of towns and villages is very considerable. Many of these, as seen from the level of the lake, present the most striking and picturesque appearances imaginable. The inhabitants of these places have devoted themselves principally to the manufacture of barometers, thermometers, and other useful instruments, which have at different periods originated in philosophical discoveries and improvements in the knowledge of physics. These simple mountaineers have shown a remarkable degree of intelligence in such matters, and an aptitude to comprehend and imitate machines and instruments used in the natural sciences, as soon as they have been invented. With this branch of industry they not merely emigrate to all parts of Italy, but to France, England, Germany, Russia—to every part of Europe—whilst some have even crossed the Atlantic both to North and South America. Like the manufacturers of plaster figures from Lucca, these barometer-makers from the lake of Como can find the simple materials employed in the construction of their wares in most of the towns or great cities whither they may go. Generally, however, of late years, in England and the more civilized portions of Europe, they have opened shops in places where they have settled for longer or shorter periods. But the number of those who have re-

linquished their own country, and made a permanent settlement in England and elsewhere, is remarkably small. The attachment to their mountain homes is as strong in the breasts of the wanderers from Como as we have described it in the poor peasants from the Apennines, and their scope and ambition are the same—to return to the scenes of their birth, to become the owners of a little estate, and to build a house of their own. We must remind the reader (a circumstance, however, that will probably strike him from what has been said), that as the speculations of the Comaschi (people of Como) are more important than those of the leaders of bears, and showers of monkeys and white mice, much more money is carried back to the mountains round the lake of Como than to the Apennines. The effect of this is seen in the superiority in the style and condition of their houses, gardens, and lands. The major part of the capital thus obtained by foreign trade is invested in agriculture and in rendering productive the naturally rude or difficult uneven soil they inhabit. Their grounds could be preserved and made fruitful only by excessive care; their gardens are cultivated with much neatness, and the luxuriant vine is made to climb over the snow-white walls of their pleasant homes, or is suspended over trellices to form a verdant avenue to their doors. The general practice with those who have made their little fortunes abroad, is to leave their sons, or to invite from Italy some near relative or family connexion, to come and take possession of their shop and trade: and when this is done, and the new occupants sufficiently instructed how to proceed, the retiring tradesmen take their way back to Como. It is the custom for those who are not at very remote distances from their native country to return home once in two years, and pass the winter with their friends.

It is asserted on good authority that in these emigrating districts, except during the winter, it used to be a common thing to find not more than a tenth part of the male population at home. The women, who are strong and

laborious, did the labour of the men in their absence, cultivated their farms, which are not extensive, and with the children, tended their herds of goats and their few sheep. After the first French revolution the tide of emigration had somewhat decreased ; but since peace has been established on the Continent, and communications re-opened with England, it has gone on increasing. Though not subjected to the miserable privations of the Apennine emigrants, the Comaschi, almost universally, live very soberly, and persevere in a plan of strict economy while abroad. A few years ago there used to be a public-house somewhere in Holborn, frequented on the Saturday night by the men from the lake of Como ; and another, near Oxford-street, resorted to by the plaster-figure makers from Lucca. The writer of this article, who had lately returned from Italy, had once the curiosity to go into both these places of rendezvous. He found each party very gay—talking a great deal, but drinking very little : and he was struck, as he had often been before, by their continually recurring recollections of home, and by the pure Italian spoken by the Lucchesi, and the almost unintelligible jargon of the Comaschi. Before quitting this part of our subject, we may remark, that as the wandering Lucchesi, with their cheap plaster casts, have propagated a taste for the fine arts, so have the emigrant Comaschi served to familiarize even the poor and lowly with the discoveries of physics and useful inventions. Penetrating into one country after another, as they have long been doing, they may be considered as retailers and propagators of science. On the other hand, returning home, they have distributed the manufactures of foreign countries through their native mountains ; for every time that a Comasco returns to his village, whether it be for good or only for a short visit to see his family and friends, he carries with him a little *paccotiglia* or adventure of wares from the lands in which he has sojourned. In this way our Sheffield and Birmingham manufacturers have been indebted to them, for no articles are more acceptable than English razors, scissors, pocket-knives, &c., and these the Comaschi

carry back to their countrymen in considerable quantities. Thus these humble persons in more ways than one advance the civilization of the world.

The next class of northern Italian emigrants we shall notice are those from the Val d'Intelvi—a secluded mountain valley, about eight miles in length, situated between the lake of Como and the neighbouring lake of Lugano. The inhabitants of this district are nearly all builders and masons, architects, and civil engineers. To exercise their professions they regularly emigrate, not merely to all parts of Lombardy and of the Venetian States, but to nearly every state and province in Italy, from the Alps as far as the Neapolitan kingdom. Indeed a building of any importance is seldom found in progress in any part of the Peninsula, without a number of these industrious and ingenious emigrants being employed about it. Some of them go into Switzerland, and others seek employment in Germany. They love their homes as much as their neighbours; and, though often prevented by distance and other circumstances arising from their profession, their general object is to return to the Val d'Intelvi every winter. Many of these mountaineers are men of considerable scientific acquirements and excellent practical mathematicians. The Italian portion of the grand road of Mount Simplon, which, of the two, is better made than the French portion, though the difficulties to be overcome on the Italian side were incomparably greater than those on the French, was mainly executed under the superintendence of engineers from the Val d'Intelvi, the lake of Como, &c. Indeed these Italian mountaineers —“*gente nata in aria fina*” (people born in a subtle atmosphere), as their countrymen say of them, are justly celebrated in all Upper Italy for their perspicacity, perseverance, sagacity, and sound judgment; and from them proceed not only the best engineers, but the most distinguished lawyers.

Leaving the lakes of Como and Lugano for the lake Maggiore, we find on the shores of the latter lake another emigrating district. This is towards the head of the Lago Maggiore, near to Locarno, where the inhabitants

are chiefly house and ornamental painters or decorators. Leaving also the Lago Maggiore and approaching the Alps, not far from Domo d'Ossola, and immediately at the foot of Mount Simplon, there is another and numerous class of emigrants, who are also house-painters and whitewashers, called by the Lombards and Piedmontese "*Sbianchini*." These humble artists go to many parts of Italy and to Switzerland. They invariably leave their homes in spring and return at the approach of winter.

Another class of emigrants, the next in consequence, and perhaps superior in wealth to the Comaschi, come from the beautiful little lake of Orta, near the other end of the Lago Maggiore. These all leave home as hotel servants or keepers of little inns, from which humble condition the clever or the successful gradually raise themselves to the rank of keepers of hotels and to the acquisition of fortune. They settle in different parts of Lombardy and the rest of Upper Italy. They go to Germany, to Spain (in considerable numbers), and some of them come to England. Pagliano, the hotel-keeper in Leicester Square, though himself from Piedmont, has generally some servants from this district, who contrive even in England to live upon almost nothing, and to save nearly all their wages and other gains. To the knowledge of the writer of these notes, a few years ago, the "*Fontana de Oro*," and one or two more of the best hotels at Madrid, an hotel at Seville, one at Cadiz, and another and a very good one at Algesiras opposite Gibraltar, were kept by individuals from the Lago d'Orta and its neighbourhood. Averse to perpetual expatriation, and fond of their native spots as the rest of their countrymen, these people are continually returning home as soon as they have made a fortune, and these fortunes are in many cases very considerable. Here, therefore, as at Como, neat houses and elegant little villas are seen, added from time to time on the shores and hills above the tranquil lake. The villages are numerous, well-peopled, and prosperous; a cheerful and social spirit prevails; and the retired *osti* or innkeepers, retaining their old habits,

and being fond of crowded companies, nothing is more common than to find fifty or sixty individuals assembled in the evening at one house, playing at *tarrocco* and other games at cards, and enjoying festivity and music. Their season of greatest hilarity is the autumn—the time the Italians prefer for their *villeggiatura* or residence in the country; and at this season the lake of Orta has long been, like the famed abbey of Vallombrosa, —

“ Ricca e bella, non men religiosa,
E cortese a chiunque vi venia.”

Beauteous and rich, and not the less devout
And courteous to every comer there.

Their courtesy and hospitality are indeed at the autumnal season remarkable, and extended to all visitors whether friends or strangers. It is pleasant to see these people in the evening of life enjoying what they have so hardly earned and struggled for. The whole secret of all these emigrants retiring with independence, while the natives of the countries where they have been who exercised the same callings merely contrive to live, is to be found in their frugal, abstemious, and regular habits—in their faculty of sacrificing the present to the future—and in their laudable ambition of becoming the owners of a house and a piece of land in their own country—a prospect that is hardly ever from before their eyes.

There are a few other emigrant districts besides these described. A certain number of peasants emigrate from the Val d'Aosta, on the Piedmontese side of the Alps, exercising the same callings as the wanderers from the Apennines and the Savoyards, with whom they are often confounded. From the Italian portion of the Tyrol, also, some troops wander about every year selling their manufactures, which are *tappeti* or coverings for tables, but they seldom cross the Alps. The desire for travel is a great passion amongst the people whom we have noticed. The mountaineers of all that part of Italy which touches on, or is part of, the Alps, generally love a wandering life and are averse to service, though when they take to it they are excellent and most trustworthy domestics

The honesty, the orderly conduct, and civility (in its extended sense) of the Comaschi in particular are proverbial. These qualities strike the traveller or casual observer ; but I have it from a gentleman* who has not only been long resident on the lake of Como, but once employed in the Council of State of Milan, that for year after year there used to be scarcely an instance of a crime committed in those districts ; and that the office of Judge seemed to be a sinecure among them.

Thirteen years have passed since the preceding notes were first written, and the grave has closed over more than one dear friend who was pleased and interested by them. But the poor Italians continue to come, year after year, to our shores, and to wander through our not unkind country, although, like other and more conspicuous classes, they complain that the market is overstocked,—“*che siam troppo*,”—that there are too many of us! Yet, of late, one very valuable advantage has been offered to the more juvenile of these wanderers. Through the laudable exertions of Signor Mazzini and some other Italian gentlemen resident in London, aided by voluntary contributions of English money, a school for Italian boys has been opened in the neighbourhood of Saffron Hill, where, when their trampings for the day are ended, they mostly congregate. For the love I bear their beautiful country and the many kind friends I have had in it, I never pass these wanderers without having some little talk with them. A few weeks ago I met a couple of them on Clapham Common. They were brothers ; they came (like not a few others) from Chiaveri, in the neighbourhood of Genoa ; they had been a year in England, and were to stay a year or two longer ; then—*O' per Casa!*—hey for home ! where they had father and mother, a brother and a sister, and a good plenty of cousins. When I came up with them they were seated

* My much lamented friend the late Cavalier Giuseppe Pecchio—a man of wit and sterling worth, if there was ever one in this world.

under a tree reading in a book. The elder, who was fourteen or fifteen years old, was teaching the younger; and was competent to do it, for he read very well. As such an accomplishment is most rare among his class in his own land, I asked him where he had learned to read? "*Qui in Inghilterra*," said he, in much purer Italian than they commonly speak, "*in questo paese, nella Scuola del Signor Mazzini*" (here in England, in this country, in the school of Signor Mazzini). "Your father and mother will be happy to find you such good scholars when you go home," said I. "They will be happy, and proud, and astonished," replied the boys in a breath. This was pleasant to hear. And surely it is pleasant to reflect that these poor wanderers find in our country the means of education which are denied to them in their own.

That little humble school by Saffron Hill may do far more good to Italy than the wild impracticable schemes of revolution which are concocted by men who are safe in London or in Paris, to be executed by others who are in the lion's den, who have rushed, and who will rush to certain destruction, and who have caused and will yet occasion much public calamity and an infinitude of private woe.

Much water must flow down the Po and brown Tyber ere Italy be prepared even for the most moderate of the schemes proposed by her would-be regenerators. As for the extreme projects of these gentlemen, whether realized now or a hundred years hence, they would prove a curse to their country.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF CARNEVALS.

“ This feast is named the Carneval, which, being
Interpreted, implies ‘ farewell to flesh.’ ”—BYRON.

As I write these lines, the carneval is just expiring ; for Ash Wednesday is at hand, when all its sports and frolics give way to the dullness and fasting of Lent. I will endeavour to set down some of my recollections of that gay season in Italy,—an easy task, in which I shall be assisted by a well known print before me, that happily condenses some of the most curious features of carneval out of doors. The Egyptian obelisk that rises dimly in the back-ground of the picture, and whose austere antiquity contrasts poetically with the living bustle, uproar, and enjoyment of the principal scene, shows that it is a Roman carneval that the artist represents. With the exception of the obelisk, however, and some difference in the architecture of the houses, the engraving equally illustrates the carneval of Naples, or Milan, or Venice, or any other of the large Italian cities. The crowd and confusion, the principal masquerade characters, their action and grouping, are common to all Italian carnevals on their *good days*; and, as these saturnalia are limited, at Rome, to eight days, every carneval-day there may be considered a good one. In the rest of Italy, where carneval continues from the feast of the Epiphany to the beginning of Lent, lasting five or six weeks, only the Thursdays and Sundays are observed for out-of-door displays ; and these days are either not well observed at the beginning or become languid at the close. Within doors, indeed, particularly at Naples a few years ago, carneval used to be kept up with spirit

during all its long legitimate period ;— there being every night, private masquerades, or masquerades at the opera-house, balls, and suppers, and all kinds of feasting and mummeries in uninterrupted succession :—and very hard work it was to go through them all ! I have supported what is called a “ London season ” with considerably less loss of health and flesh. As soon as this riot of pleasure was over, the doctors with their gold-headed canes were always seen more constantly abroad, and walking much faster than usual. They had always plenty of work on their hands, being as busy *after* it as milliners and tailors, cooks and confectioners, fiddlers and dancing-masters, had been *during* carnival. Even in a physical sense, the abstinence and quiet of Lent were indispensable : and during that sober season, when there were no feasting and dancing, and the opera, on the nights on which it was allowed to be open, closed at the sober hour of eleven, without any ballet, people had time to recover themselves ; although there annually occurred a few unlucky cases where the long revelling had sown the seeds of consumption, or some other incurable disease. But this was carnival in-doors. Let us return to the streets of Rome.

In the afternoon, about three o'clock, the Corso begins gradually to fill with people,—some masked, and some in their usual holiday-dresses,—some on foot and some in hired carriages. About an hour later, the equipages of the nobility and gentry swell the crowd ; and the open balconies and windows of every house in that long street are crammed full of company, who, for the most part, are not mere spectators, but actors in the ever varying farce. The carriages and the horses are for the most part decked out in a very fine or a very capricious manner ; and the anomalies represented in the print, where a coachman, dressed as a Spanish cavalier of the olden times, is driving an old Tabellone, or notary, with a huge wine-flask (extended towards a Punch on stilts), and a Roman doctor, with “ spectacles on nose,” while a small grown Punch climbs up the side steps, and a full grown Punchinello, with a squeaking trumpet to his

lips, and a sturdy, turbaned Moor, with a banner in his hand, act as footmen,—are such amusing contrasts as continually occur, and give the best parts of the drollery to the scene. As these carriages pass through the crowd, at a slow stately pace, those within them address or gesticulate to their friends at the balconies of the houses,—or in other carriages,—or in the streets, on foot, and generally pelt them with sugar-plums. This fire is returned by the more stationary actors: and if you look to the left of the picture, you will see a gentleman and a lady, with uplifted hands, full of sugar-plums, taking aim; and in another balcony to the right, two gentlemen pelting with much vigour. The greatest part of the fun, after the hodge-podge of costume, lies in this sugar-plum warfare; for what with the noise of French horns and drums, cow-horns and guitars, fifes, fiddles, tambourines, and penny trumpets, and the din of thousands of voices,—the masked all squeaking in a conventional carnival falsetto, and the unmasked roaring to the top of their lungs,—no delicate passages of wit can be well heard. It is a point of gallantry, when ladies are fired at, to mix choice bon-bons and sweet-meats, wrapped up in pretty bits of paper with nice poesies between, about “core” and “amore;” and when people do not mind the expense, they make use only of good eatable sugar-plums with the kernels of sweet almonds and carraway-seeds inside. Wherever these are most scattered there do the little boys and ragamuffins most abound; for the Italians generally have a very sweet tooth, and these poor fellows will run the most imminent risk to fill their stomachs and pockets with *confetti da signore*.* I have seen hundreds of them at a time down on their knees, and even crawling among the wheels of the carriages and the horses’ legs to pick up the plums, which they think it a sin and a shame to waste. In the picture before me, there, in the fore-ground, you will see a queer little specimen of the rising generation of Rome, with a nightcap on his head in the very posi-

* Gentlemanly sugar-plums.

tion I mean, picking up the confetti close to the horses' hoofs. The animals seem spirited, and he may probably get a kick, but that will not hinder him from trying his luck again. I verily believe if the gorge of a *tête-de-pont* bristled with cannon, or the approach of a redoubt, were paved with sugar-plums, these urchins would march up to it. In the course of their carnival operations a broken head or rib, a crushed hand or foot, sometimes occur; but from their wonderful dexterity, I should not think these casualties are numerous. The worst of this sugar-plum fight (and a pretty general evil it is) is, that the poorer or more parsimonious of the revellers, instead of using good plums that cost money, employ villainous hard make-believes, composed of flour and plaster-of-Paris, which hurt where they hit almost like stones. I speak feelingly on this subject, for on one occasion, when embarked in the "ship of fools," I received a black-eye, to say nothing of a bleeding nose; and, in my own party, I had more than one brother in misfortune. Even the good, sweet, and *dear* confetti, when thrown with force in handfuls, or propelled through long tin tubes, as they frequently are, are not to be faced with impunity. I have frequently seen heroes who took the field with a determination to engage in the thickest of the fight, cover their faces with visors made of netted wire, and carry tin shields and bucklers on their left arms, which gave them a very warlike appearance. This warfare at Rome, however, was spiritless, compared with the carnival campaigns at Naples in my time. The Neapolitans are a magnanimous people in regard to sugar-plums; and then the population is triple that of Rome, with gentry of wealth and substance; and a secular nobility can take a more active part than would be seemly in the Abbati, Monsignori, Cardinali, and the noblesse of the church at Rome. I should think that for one pound of confetti at Rome ten are expended at Naples. I have seen the streets at night, after a good field-day, and when all the Neapolitans had betaken themselves to the theatres or other in-door amusements, look as if it had snowed; for, spite of the activity of the young plum-gatherers, the far

greater part of good confetti, and all the flour-and-plaster ones, are trodden and pounded under the feet of the multitude, and ground by the horses' hoofs and carriage-wheels into a fine snow-white powder. The amount of the fun and spirit of the afternoon may be calculated by the extent of the confetti-dust in the evening. I remember walking down Toledo one carneval night with the old Duca di —, who had an energetic way of expressing himself, which is far from uncommon among his countrymen. From the Studj to the Palazzo Reael, or from one end of that mile-long street to the other, the ground was sugared, floured, and plastered all over. "Corpo di Bacco!" cried the Duca, "c'è stato quest'oggi un consumo di confetti magnifico! Questo mio si chiama carnevale!"—or, "By the body of Bacchus! there has been a magnificent consumption of sugar-plums to-day! Now this is what I call a carneval!"

When I was first at Naples, the greatest consumer of confetti in this way was old King Ferdinand, who has been represented by contemporary historians as a sanguinary tyrant; but who, in fact, was only a very ignorant, very indolent, and misled king, and by nature a very hearty, jovial buffoon, and very good-natured in the main. In my mind's eye I still see the old man with his plain grey coat and pantaloons, his white hanging hair, and broad-brimmed Quaker-looking hat, just as I used to see him during the carnevals of 1817 and 1818, when he went regularly to the house of the Princess Partanna (his wife by a left-handed marriage), which was conveniently situated midway in the Toledo on the left hand side of that street as you go up from the royal palace. There he used to station himself in the spacious balcony, with a few of his favourites in his rear, and with a sackful of sugar-plums on either side of him, the mouths of the sacks being open and the edges folded over, like sample corn-sacks in our market-places; and there he used to pelt with a profusion that delighted the hearts of all the *lazzaroncelli*,* for his majesty's con-

* Though the term no longer applies to any extent, they call the poorer classes in Naples *Lazzaroni*, or Lazaruses.

fetti were of the right sort. His own great delight was when any of his solemn-looking old courtiers, or gouty, powder-headed generals, passed in their carriages beneath, or presented themselves at balconies anywhere within reach, to pelt them until they could not see, and were obliged to run away, or hide their hands and faces between their cocked hats and their knees. And then as he made any capital hit (and to do his majesty justice, he was a capital shot both with fowling-piece and sugar-plums), he would roar out,—“O’ ví lá, ce’ l’aggio dato! l’aggio suonato!”—(Only look there! I have given it him! I have served him out!) and then how he would laugh! not all the din of Toledo on a carnival day could drown his noise. Some three or four years after, when he went to that almost equally farcical affair, the Congress of Verona, as he happened to be the oldest of those assembled there, it was the fashion to call him the “Nestor of the kings,” which, considering his enormous and avowed ignorance, almost looked like quizzing him. But, though he had not the most wisdom, Ferdinand had certainly the loudest laugh and voice of any sovereign (or subject either) in Christendom. I must also mention as a fact, honourable to the memory of Ferdinand, that in the sugar-plum warfare he did not shelter himself behind his prerogative and divine right as king, but as he pelted his subjects and others, so he permitted them to pelt him, and stood their fire with much good humour, though I have sometimes seen his nose, which was prominent and of extraordinary size, suffer for it. Some of the English who thronged Naples during such seasons occasionally carried the joke too far, pelting his majesty with all their might, and making downright horse-play of it; and once I remember, that a party of this sort, mounted on a high car which brought them near to a level with him, fairly, or rather foully, drove the old man away from the balcony before he had finished one sack of his confetti. These high cars or vans are very striking objects in carnival processions both at Naples

Lazzaroncelli is the diminutive, meaning young, or little Lazzaruses.

and at Rome, as in other Italian cities. You must fancy a machine something like the late Mr. Hunt's blacking-van, but still longer in the body and higher on the wheels. There are many such in carnival countries. Upon the body of these machines, it is customary to build upper works, which represent a tower or fortress with battlements and loop-holes, a ship with masts, sails, and flowing colours, or the like; and as all this is dragged slowly along by six long-tailed horses, or an equal number of oxen, the effect is very natural and imposing, particularly if you consider that towers move and ships go upon dry land. From my own experience I should feel inclined to say that a ship is the best form in which to rig out these cars. I remember one which the city of Naples cannot yet have forgotten. To form its keel two cars were spliced together lengthwise,—and from the top of the cars to the level of the decks was, if anything, higher than one of our ten-gun brigs;—from the line which represented water-mark there hung all round canvass, painted green, which trailed to the ground, concealing cars and car-wheels, and looking for all the world like sea-water. The crew of this carnival man-of-war were all properly equipped in tarred-straw hats, blue jackets, checked shirts, loose black-silk handkerchiefs, and white-duck trousers. There was a band of music on the quarter-deck, and iced punch and other refreshments; and forwards, or in the bow of the vessel, four punchinellos ate long macaroni to music. As the vessel sailed up Toledo, the sailors shook out the colours and handed the sails, to the sound of the boatswain's whistle; and then they fought the ship according to the word of command, pouring out on both sides larboard and starboard, and doing such execution with the sugar-plums as never was known, for they were on a level with the first-floor balconies, and could rake them all. As the manœuvres were managed by some of our frolicsome midshipmen, they were very seamanlike, but I am sorry to add, they fired with such violence that they broke a good many panes of glass all along Toledo.

Punches and harlequins, which are seen in the

picture, are the most frequent figures in all Italian carnavals; but harlequin, to be seen in perfection, ought to be seen and *heard* at Venice; where, by the way, he is no more like the frisking, dancing, jumping, nonentity of our theatres, than night is like day, or wit like posture-making; and as for Punch—dear, droll Policinella! he is to be found in perfection nowhere save in his own land, Naples!—in every other part of Italy he is out of his element, and is like a foreigner speaking a foreign language he does not very well understand.

I have mentioned the celebrated farce often played in the plebeian theatre of San Carlino at Naples, “*Le Novanta-nove Disgrazie di Policinella*,” or the Ninety-nine Misfortunes of Punch. In the last carnival but one I saw at that city, a distinguished amateur Punch got up an admirable procession. He walked along Toledo with Mrs. Policinella at his right hand, and ninety-eight young Policinellas, of both genders, and all possible sizes, followed in his wake, and “ever as he went” he smote his forehead and shouted, “*Ecco quà le vere novanta-nove disgrazie di Policinello*” (Here are the true ninety-nine misfortunes of Punch!)—and the joints of his tail that were spread out in almost interminable length kept crying aloud, “Give us to eat, papa, for we are dying of hunger, and be all true children of papa Punch!” Talking of tails reminds me that devils are very common *figuranti* in Italian carnavals, and there is no getting up a good devil without a tail, which is an appendage difficult to manage in a crowd, where people will keep tugging at it. An ingenious friend of mine, however, got over this difficulty by stuffing his tail with pins and needles arranged in *chevaux-de-frise* fashion, which made it a tail difficult to handle.

I remember nothing particular about the Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Chinese, Hindoos, and the rest, which characters are, externally, pretty much like what we see in our own masked balls. But only conceive the difference between tens (or perhaps only units) and hundreds; between a formal affair got up in a ball-room, within four walls, and a popular general outpouring in

the streets and public places, and under the pure enlivening atmosphere and broad day-light of Southern Italy, with thousands upon thousands of the neighbouring peasantry pouring into the city to enjoy the scene, and add to its variety with their different and, in general, picturesque or grotesque costumes. The last-named part of the great picture always struck me as the pleasantest part of all.

During my time in Italy, which extended, with some short periods of absence, from 1816 to 1827, I thought I discerned a gradual decline in the spirit of carnivals, which will probably go out altogether, and be forgotten of men. As a truly popular amusement—as a circumstance and season which brought people of all classes together, and put them, for the time being, on the same footing,—I should almost regret such a sober consummation. My regret may be the more excusable, as I rarely saw the licence allowed seriously abused, or fun and frolic convert themselves into riot and shameful excess. (I mean as far as the popular body was concerned.)

At Naples, after the out-of-door fun had ceased,—which was generally about half-an-hour after sunset—the great street of Toledo, which is there the scene of the revelry, remained for some two or three hours as deserted and as silent as the cloisters of a suppressed monastery. Then enormous torches began to blaze and fires to burn in moveable iron cressets right in front of the great theatre of San Carlo—the longest and widest and finest in Europe, as the Neapolitans boast,—and then, from all parts of the town poured streams of people to take part in the masked ball and other frolics going on within, or to stand by the portico of the theatre and see the different masks as they entered,—for, as it is not for every man to go to Corinth, so is it not for every Neapolitan to pay half a piastra for an entrance ticket. The pit of that truly magnificent theatre was boarded over, and brought nearly upon a level with the stage; the stage, to a considerable depth, was thrown open, so that, between it and the boarded pit, a most ample space—an almost sublime *parquet*—was afforded to the maskers, dancers,

and promenaders. Yet, in those merry, piping, prosperous days which intervened between the restoration of King Ferdinand in 1815 and the unfortunate revolution in the summer of 1820, I have seen that space—stage and pit—covered and crowded; and every box in the house filled with gay company, and ringing with carnival jests and laughter. Alas! the young and happy of that time have grown old and care-worn, and but too many of those old families, with names and titles that sounded like romance, have, now-a-days, barely means of purchasing their diurnal macaroni.

At the joyous period to which my memory often carries me back, the merriest and most roguish of maskers, and the best deviser of groups for the masked balls at San Carlo, was my then intimate associate Rossini, the composer, or "*Il gran Maestro Rossini*." Does he, in his present wealth and worldly-wiseness, remember a certain group of Spoonbills which he helped to organise and equip, and in which Marianna Conti, that lively *élève* of the classical Vigano, so much distinguished herself? That Spoonbill quadrille was surely a pretty conceit and right merrie device. *Faceva furóre*. It roused a fury of applause. Ingenious, simple, perfect was the mechanism by which the broad resonant tips of the long, broad beaks or bills were made to clap together, and keep time with the music like castanets. I hear the sounds at this moment. That incomparable Spoonbill quadrille is still before my eyes—

They dancen deftly and singingsote
In their merriment.*

* Spenser.

BALLO DEGLI ORSI, OR BEAR-DANCING, AT ROME.

WITH a few melancholy exceptions, limited almost entirely, we believe, to what are technically called Caravan bears, or Show or Fair bears—all our members of the ursine family are now confined to our various zoological gardens. Bores he may yet meet in abundance: but a man may now walk every day in the year from Whitechapel Church to Charing Cross, and back from the Cross to the Church, without the remotest chance of meeting with a bear, either walking or dancing. We are men of the last century, and belong not to *New* but to *Old* England (and to us it must be Old England or no England at all); and we can well remember the time when dancing bears were a common sight in the streets of London, and when they shared the popularity and glory of our more than Babylon, in about an equal degree with Punch—whom a utilitarian and timid age, and a heartless legislature, have in vain endeavoured to put down, as a nuisance that caused stoppages, and frightened horses, and made tumble out of their saddles bad riders, who never ought to have been in them.

The bears that danced in London in the time of my childhood (the happiness and excitement of which happy season owed whole elements to the exhibition) were discreet, well-tutored, well-mannered bears; and 'their leaders were of that gentle and gentlemanly kind that one of the guests of Tony Lumpkin, Esq., at the Three Jolly Pigeons, had in his mind's eye when he said—"What though a man does lead dancing bears about the country, that's no reason why he should'nt be a gentleman." They were mostly black-eyed, black-haired,

picturesque Italians, from the ridges of the Apennines, or gentle Savoyards from the declivities of the Alps.



They made their bears dance to pleasant and pastoral music—to the pipe and tabor; and it seems to me that I have never heard in England the true legitimate tabor since the days when I saw a hugeous brown bear dancing to it in the City Road. In Italy, at a much more recent period, I have heard the sounds produced by that happy combination of stick and sheep-skin; but even there it was in conjunction with an interesting member of the hirsute bear family, who was cutting capers in the Campo Vaccino, or Forum of ancient Rome, which—so fleets the glory of the world!—is now little else than a cattle-market. In our mind the pipe and tabor and the bear are inseparably connected: we can never figure the image of the quadruped without seeing and hearing the two most antique and primitive instruments to which his fore-bears lifted their hind legs when George the Third was king regnant of these realms. Why are the sounds of pipe and tabor heard no more? Were we to chance to hear them of a sudden in some great thoroughfare, we should certainly turn round into some side street (one of those streets which Punch takes possession of to make people happy without dread of the police or an indictment for nuisance) in the entire expectation of seeing a bear dance. To us those dancing bears were, and for that matter still are, full of fun and of terror, of laughter and of awe. It was an exhibition wherein the sublime and ridiculous were not separated by even the single step, but where they met hand-in-hand and reigned conjointly; and absolute was the dominion of either in turns—each reign being a tyranny whilst it lasted. The monster frisked and gambolled in the most grotesque manner, the leader occasionally touching him in his nether or more fleshy parts with a little goad. I hope the point of the goad was not too sharp. I think it was not, and never could have been, for those bear-leaders were so gentle and so funny themselves. And how could they have been otherwise, leading a life of pipe and tabor and dance? And when the slender goad touched the bear, and the pipe played out more shrilly, and the rat-tat-tat of the tabor went quicker, how did the heavy gentleman

in the rough brown coat, with a rope to his snout, lump and caper round the little circle of which the leader and chief was the centre and the happy laughing spectators the edges! Was there ever anything so cumbersome as the bear's lightness or so solemn as his frisks? The obese German that went to Paris late in life for a French education, and that danced on a drawing-room table *pour se faire vif* (to make himself lively), was but a type of this dancing bear. There was or is no equivalent for him except the dull matter-of-fact man that tried or tries to be witty, or the punster that puns with a solemn immovable face. And then for the terrible, that highest part of the sublime. When the bear had done dancing he stalked round the circle—being still on his hind legs—with a little tin dish in his mouth, to collect the contributions of the spectators: and he would come close up to you, breathing and puffing in your face, and when halfpennies or pennies rattled into the dish he would growl a complacent growl, and would make a most dismal and terrific noise, expressive of his disappointment when the coin fell short or was slow in coming. At the time we speak of, as being part and parcel of our own experience, Bruin's fore-paws reached much higher than our head; and in our eyes his proportions were altogether monstrous and gigantic. Doctor Buckland may bury his fossil bones; his monsters of flood and field are pigmies to us now to what the bear was then. And then the true nursery stories we knew about bears and their doings, and their never-to-be-satisfied voracity! How many mariners did we know of, that had been eaten on the lonely shore by brown bears, or on ice-bergs or in whaling-boats by white bears? As for the dark old man with a long tail and a wide bag that came to carry off naughty children, we had ceased to believe in him, for we had never seen him with our waking eyes, or heard him with our waking ears; but the bear we had seen many a time and often; we had even touched his rough coat towards that part which is farthest from the mouth, and when his mouth was in another direction and his head held tightly up by that most fearless and won-

drous of men, the bear-ward or leader; and as for his voice, had we not heard the bear growl, and roar, and grunt, and yell? Many a time have we wakened from our sleep, when a foot perchance had got beyond the warm protecting bed-clothes, and fancied that the cold nose of a hungry bear was close to us. These were visionary terrors, but they came from what we had seen and heard when awake. In this philosophic age no child feels such a night dread of an *ichthyosaurus*: he has never seen the monster in the flesh, and (which is very comforting) never will see it. The dancing bear was muzzled, and was held by a strong rope; but the ponderous strength of the muzzle spoke of the terrible strength that was in the bear's jaws, and of the necessity of putting an iron stopper upon his appetite and man-eating propensities. Terrible, in short, was the dancing bear of our childish days; terrible was he and funny, and the more terrible from being so droll. Let metaphysicians say what they will, children have a strong sense of the force of contrast; and let those who doubt it see them take sugar first and senna afterwards, and then sugar after that. Generally, but not always, the dancing bear was accompanied by a monkey or a dancing dog, or a leash of monkeys. [I believe that the legitimate bear drama was a monologue, and severely repudiated the adjunct of dogs and monkeys.] I confess I loved to see the monkey with the bear; the light roguery of the one showed off so well by the side of the heavy pranks of the other—the force of contrast could no further go. At times the monkey would dance a *pas-seul* on the shoulders of the bear; at other times he would, with many antics and grimaces, hunt the bear's head for that little creature which has been too exclusively described as being familiar to man. At other seasons the bear would stretch himself at his full length upon the ground, and shut his eyes as if he were fast asleep, or even stone dead; and thereupon jacko would dance upon his body from snout to tail, playing all manner of tricks and taking all sorts of liberties with the great monster, even to the opening of his heavy eye-lids with his impertinent little

fingers. To this last trick the monkey tribe in their intercourse with the bear family are said to be particularly addicted. We mention the fact as suggestive of reflection and experiment to zoologists, ideologists, and other philosophers. Our own dear and ingenious and very learned friend, the late W. S. R., Esq., (he was bow-bearer to the sovereign for the New Forest, and as such was sworn to be of good and kindly behaviour to all her majesty's wild beasts,) who relieved his more serious studies and high official duties with investigating the characters and habits of various four-footed and four-handed animals, and whose conversation, never

“tuned to one key,

Ran on chace, race, horse, mare, fair, bear, and monkey,”*

related a very striking anecdote to illustrate the habits of a Bruin and the spirit of philosophical inquiry that was in a certain jacko. This bear and monkey were fellow-passengers on board of a ship, or rather they were kept, voyage after voyage, on board of a man-of-war to amuse the sailors when they were home-sick or otherwise out of spirits. Being of the sluggish nature of his race, the bear would lie for whole hours together upon deck, sleeping or dozing in the shadow of the bulwark nearest the sun; and as he slept or dozed he would frequently pass his paw over his closed eyes, or twitch it up or down his rough face. This was carefully observed by the monkey, whose post, for the most part, was in the shrouds or up in the tops (whither he was often driven by the sailors for some mischevious prank or other, or by the younger midshipmen, who are apt to be rather more mischievous than monkeys), whence he had a fine bird's-eye view of all that was doing upon deck. One day jacko was seen to descend from the tops, creep quietly up to the bear, and open one of his eyes, into which he peeped with a very inquisitive and knowing

* Epistle from W. S. R., at Brighton, to the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere, in Malta.

look. As there was a standing feud between the two, or as the monkey's chief occupation consisted of teasing the bear, the thing at first attracted no extraordinary degree of attention. But when it was seen day after day that jacko did the same thing, and was much excited whenever the bear passed his paw over his dreamy eyes, or was uneasy in his sleep, the captain and the surgeon began to consider of it, and, being by birth Scotchmen and consequently metaphysicians, they soon came to the conclusion that the monkey lifted up the bear's eyelids and peeped into his eyes—to see what he was dreaming about.*

For all that I know to the contrary, dancing bears may have become as rare a sight in the streets of Rome as they are in the streets of London. But when I first knew the Eternal City it was not so. One or two dancing bears were then to be seen every common working-day of the week, and more on Sundays and Saints' days, and other high festivals. Punch too at that time flourished amazingly in the city of the Cæsars. You could not walk from the Piazza di Spagna to St. Peter's, or the Vatican, or the Coliseum, or the Capitol, without hearing his shrill crowing voice. This made a considerate friend and countryman of ours say to another traveller who was complaining of the dearth of amusements, or lamenting that after one had seen the ancient buildings and churches and the galleries of pictures and statues, Rome was rather a dull place—"My dear fellow, have we not dancing bears? Have we not Punch? Then how can you be dull here?"

The leaders or bear-wards that I was acquainted with at Rome and in other ancient and venerable cities of Italy came chiefly from the most mountainous regions of the Duchy of Parma. I have already mentioned the *Proveditori*, or the men of capital who provide the

* For some variations to this good story we beg to refer our reader to 'Apology addressed to the Travellers' Club,' or 'Anecdotes of Monkeys,' a little book which will much amuse him if he can only find a copy of it.

monkeys, bears, or other animals for their poorer and perambulating countrymen, as well as the curious co-operation of capital or labour which is, or was, not uncommon amongst these mountaineers and showmen. I have also given to fame the name and character of Rossi of Compiano, one of the greatest speculators in the bear and monkey line, who, after wandering through the world on foot, acquired much money, became a considerable landed proprietor in his native Apennines, and imported his wild animals direct from Africa. When first I wrote that notice—thirteen years ago—the great Rossi of Compiano was flourishing in his affluence, and I believe that he is still living, though he has long ceased to attend his beasts, or (in the phraseology of his countrymen) “to go about the world with the comedy.”*

A French dancing-master, on observing the uncouth gambols and gambades of some uninstructed clowns, said with an oracular shrug of the shoulders, and a voice of much pathos—“Poor human nature! it cannot dance of itself: it must be taught!” This is equally true of ursine nature: bears, like men, must be taught ere they can dance. I have explained on a former occasion the first lesson and rudiments of bear-dancing as they used to be taught in the mountains of the Duchy of Parma. A great deal depended upon the bear’s *chaussure*. Bruin’s fore-legs were left in their natural state, but his hind-legs were protected by a sort of boot or buskin made of leather, and having a wooden sole. Being thus *chaussé*, he was put upon a heated flagstone, with a charcoal fire underneath it; and then Bruin naturally raised his unprotected fore-paws in the air, and moved his hind-legs up and down in order to avoid the heat of the flagstone, upon which he was kept by means of ropes and a circle of strong hoops. While he capered

* These simple people of the Apennines give the elevated name of *comedy* to the gambols of monkeys and the dancing of bears. It is almost the only comedy they know, for even Punch and his wife are strangers in these very wild and very poor regions.

his instructors blew their pipes and beat their drums or their tabors. After a few lessons of this sort Bruin would stand upon his hind-legs and cut capers as soon as ever he heard the music. But to make a Vestris bear it was necessary to take him in hand in his early life. Not only does not human nature dance of itself, but it is scarcely to be taught after it has attained to years of discretion. The Polkamania which has made the middle-aged and even the old whose education had been neglected in their youth, to think of learning to dance—which has led to the formation of Polka clubs and Polka classes, wherein fathers and grandfathers are toiling two nights a week to master the difficulties of the heel and toe step, hath also demonstrated in a very forcible manner the expediency and, in fact, the indispensable necessity of early tuition. Madame Michaud, that best of teachers for the young, will tell you that she can hardly have her children *too* young. It is just the same with bears.

Some speculators of the Val di Taro once made a great mistake, which was attended with very serious consequences. Being at Genoa, they heard of a very fine big bear that was on board a Baltimore schooner. They bargained with the Yankee skipper, who was very glad to get rid of so troublesome a passenger, but who nevertheless made them pay a good price for the monster. It was a beast of the very biggest size, and no doubt would have been very attractive if only he could have been tamed and taught; but he was an old bear, and had lived a long time in the republic of the United States. He had not been a day in the possession of the poor Italians before they wished him down the skipper's throat or back at Baltimore. Great was the toil and trouble they had in getting him across the Apennines from Genoa to their own secluded valley: he was sullen, morose, and at the same time snappish and petulant. But it was not until they tried to give him his first dancing lesson (his education had been entirely neglected all the while he had been living under the Stripes and Stars) that they found what an untameable monster they had got. The

flagstone being prepared, he was brought forth. With much difficulty and some danger the boots or buskins were put upon his hind legs; but when they got him upon the stone and stirred up the charcoal beneath, *Misericordia!* there was no holding him. As soon as he felt the heat, instead of lifting his fore-paws up in the air, and dancing on his hind ones, he uttered a fearful growl, made a still more fearful spring, and breaking hoops and cordage, and upsetting all the men that opposed him, he burst away and made with all speed for the wooded side of the mountain with some of the broken ropes hanging to him. The poor men, tearing their hair and cursing the day that they had seen him, followed as fast they could; but though they might have shot him, they found it impossible to capture him alive; which, seeing the price they had paid for him to the Baltimore skipper, they were naturally anxious to do. The monster was thus allowed to gain the covert of the thick wood, where he abided for some time to the great terror of the mountaineers, and to their no small loss, for he killed several of their goats and sheep. It was even said that he killed and ate up a child; while on the other side of the mountains, it was reported that he had killed and eaten not one child, but a whole family. The magistrates and other local authorities of Borgo Val di Taro, Compiano, Bardi, Bedonia, and all the neighbouring townships and villages, were alarmed by the reports they heard, and in their first anger an order was issued for throwing into prison the unlucky bear-wards who had brought such an undisciplinable, perilous, unmannered, and unmanageable bear into the country. In the end, however, the justices of the peace did what was much better: they sent out a company of soldiers, the whole *Posse Comitatus*, armed as sportsmen, and invited the peasantry to a grand battue. The poor bear-wards received an invitation; but their hearts were sad—they were grieving after the hard dollars which the Yankee skipper had got from them—and so they declined attending, saying (which was true enough) that they were no sportsmen, and that it was their business not to shoot

bears, but to teach bears how to dance. The battue was made, and the bear being surrounded, was finally killed—though not until he had almost as many balls in him as there are stars in the banner under which he had lived and sailed. We believe that since this time none of the *Proveditori* and none of the teachers have ever dealt with an old American bear.

The bears I saw exhibited at Rome and in the other parts of Italy, were all imported from places far abroad, from different foreign countries. Yet there are bears of native growth, bears that are born and that die in mountains not many miles from the Eternal City. Horace was once frightened by finding a wild bear in his path; and the present wild bears of the Italian mountains are no doubt descended from the same stock as the Bruin that scared the great Roman poet. Some travellers have laughed at Horace's fright, and have questioned whether he could have met a real wild bear: this scepticism is allied with ignorance. The rugged and lofty summits of the Great Rock of Italy (*Il Grand Sasso d'Italia*), the highest peak in the peninsula, nearly always covered with deep snow; the mountains above *Aquila*; the upper parts of *Monte Majello*, that towers above *Sulmona*; and some other portions of the *Apennines* which lie within the two provinces of the *Abruzzi*—all abound with wolves, and have, though in much smaller numbers, native wild bears. I never saw one, but was told that they were not unfrequently seen by sportsmen; and on crossing *Monte Majello*, which has in its deep crevasses fields of ice and glaciers, I was shown marks in the snow which our guide confidently declared to be the foot-marks of a bear. They seemed newly made, and certainly were not the foot-marks of the wolf or of any of the wild animals usually inhabiting those regions. We were told that this native bear was too shy and wild to be taught dancing; and that from his inferior size, he would be but an unattractive performer and spectacle compared with the big bears brought from foreign parts.

If my memory does not betray me, some few *Abruz-*

zese bears were however, in former times, caught, taught, and exhibited. However this may be, or whether there were native Italian bears that danced to pipe and tabor in the streets of Rome and all through Europe, it is certain that there have been Abruzzese bear-wards—men that have wandered from these mountains with bear and monkey over a good part of the world. One of them found in England a loving Englishwoman who quitted her home and country for him, who crossed the sea with him when he re-crossed the Dover Straits, and who followed him and his bear, on foot, through France and Savoy, across the mighty Alps, over the Apennines, and through all Italy until he regained his home in the mountains of the Abruzzi. As I was approaching a very small hamlet, situated in one of the ruggedest parts of Monte Majello, my guide told me that I should there find a countrywoman, the wife of an honest old man who, in his young days, had gone about the world with a dancing bear. I hurried to make this curious acquaintance. The good woman, whose name, Mary, had easily been Italianized into *Maria*, appeared then to be at least, sixty years old, though, from her own account, she must have been some ten years younger. She had led a life of hard toil, and the peasantry of these bleak and poor regions are obliged to live very sparingly. She had been more than thirty years in these mountains, and in all that time had never seen a countryman or heard a word of her own language, except some score of words, such as bread, meat, money, &c., which her husband had picked up when strolling from town to town in England with his bear, and which he would repeat now and then, when he was merry, to make her heart glad. She had almost forgotten her own tongue; her vocabulary of English words was not much more copious than her husband's; but still there was no mistaking the country of her birth and parentage. She told me, in very curious Italian, that she came from a small village not far from Manchester; that her family were all poor weavers who worked at home in their own cottage, and that she herself had learned to work a little in that way

when the Italian destined to be her husband came to the village: that both man and bear were accommodated with lodging in her father's house or in a shed behind it: that she was mightily afraid of the bear, but became very fond of his keeper, who was very fond of her; that they made love by signs and by an exchange of services and kind deeds; and that so, when he and his bear had perambulated all that district, and had collected all the pennies they could, and were about to take their departure for ever, the man cried, and she cried, and then the man showed that he would stay a little longer; and then, by means of sign-making and other natural explanations, it was agreed and fully settled that they should be man and wife; and, as quickly as could be, they were married in her own village church, and since her coming into her husband's country, she had been married again by his village priest. She told me with some fond pride that her Giovanni was a bright-eyed handsome young man with long jet-black hair, when she married him and first began to tramp with him and his bear. He was old now—a good many years older than herself—and his hair was grey and his beard very rough and white; but for the rest he was a hale man, with that honest open countenance which prevails very generally amongst the mountaineers of the Abruzzi. They had had sundry children, of whom some had died in their infancy, and one or two in the French armies, into which they had been forced by Bonaparte's conscription. A daughter and a son were still living; the daughter was out at service in the town of Sulmona; the son was a good shepherd, and out among the mountains with his master's sheep. The matron said she was little more than sixteen when she married. As well as I could make out from her very loose dates and her few and yet confused details of facts, she must have left England in 1792 or 1793, or immediately before this country joined in the first great war of the French Revolution. After staying some time in France, she and her husband, in company with other wandering Italians, set off for Italy, taking their way through Savoy and across Mont Cenis: they were much

disturbed, alarmed, and hindered. The fine easy road across the Alps had not yet been made ; the ascent to and the descent from the Cenis were then nothing but mule-paths, rough, narrow, and dangerous. All the passes of the Alps they came near unto were occupied by troops, and great batteries, or were daily visited by marching columns. The troops must have been those which belonged on the one side to the French Republic, and on the other to the King of Sardinia and the Emperor of Germany : they were desperately contending for the passes of the Alps and the dominion of Upper Italy ; they were engaged in the most momentous of struggles, and the destiny of nations depended upon the result of the long conflict. But all this was as nothing to the poor young Englishwoman and her husband, whose sole care was how to get their dancing bear with safety to the other side of the mountains. If they lost their bear they would lose their little all ; if they saved their bear, let French republicans succeed in forcing their way into Italy, or let the armies of the King of Sardinia and the Emperor succeed in keeping them out of it, Giovanni, with his wife and dancing-bear, might jog quietly along from Susa to Turin and from Turin to Rome, living and even saving a little money on the way ; and when his long campaign should be ended, Giovanni might sell his well-taught bear for a good price, and carry the money home with him to his mountains. Sad were their fears, exhausting their troubles : at times they gave themselves up to despair and looked upon the bear as no better than dead ; for the rude unconscionable soldiers, after making him dance for nothing, would threaten to shoot him for sport ; but in the end they got through the Alps, and the armies, and all their troubles. Giovanni sold his bear before he reached Rome, and then going to his own mountains he abandoned that line of life entirely. At the time of my visit (it will soon be twenty years ago) the old couple had a small piece of ground and a stone-built cottage of their own. The woman had never heard from her country since the day she left it. For many a long year the war interrupted

all communication, and it is more than probable that her family were not naturally epistolary correspondents. Her own accomplishments included neither reading nor writing; and her husband had never attended any school except the bear's dancing-school. She was evidently glad to see a countryman, and she offered me some bread and milk, which seemed all she had in the house to offer: but when I asked her whether she would not like to see her own country again before she died, she shook her head, and said that it was many a year too late to think of that; that she was very well where she was; that if she returned nobody would know her and she would know nobody, and that her father and mother must have been dead long since.



ARRIVAL OF REAPERS IN THE PONTINE MARSHES.

THE whole of the Campagna, or Plain of Rome, from the Tiber to the mountains on the frontier of the Neapolitan kingdom, is marshy, and during the summer months most unhealthy; but the southern part of this tract, called, *par excellence*, the “Paludi” (or the marshes) is more particularly distinguished for its insalubrity. From Torre Tré Ponti to Terracina, a distance of twenty-five miles, the land is low and flat, and in some parts, both inland at the foot of the mountains and near the sea-shore, covered with water. In breadth from the sea-line to the Apennines, the district varies from ten to twelve miles, and on this wide expanse there is scarcely a hillock, scarcely a tree. It is traversed by a noble road, as straight as an arrow; the high-road from Rome to Naples, running in part over the celebrated Via Appia, which was laid down in the time of the Roman republic, about three centuries before the Christian era. In travelling along this road, the eye ranges over a rich expanse of pasture and corn lands, the cultivated part, however, bearing but a small proportion to the pasturage. Not a hedge, not a fence of any kind, occurs for many miles, the limits of the vast farms being merely marked by *termini*, or stones sunk in the ground. Scarcely a human habitation is to be seen, except at very wide intervals a large gloomy *casale*, looking more like a fortress than a peaceful farm-house.

Smiling under a clear blue sky, and lighted up by a glorious summer sun, this great flat, though monotonous, is for a while pleasant to look upon. Green and smooth, it is not unlike many parts of Cambridgeshire, or the more open parts of the fens of Lincolnshire; but the same

causes—an insufficient drainage, and the vicinity of stagnant waters, which in England produce ague, here, in a hotter climate, generate malaria fevers of the worst description. Hence, beyond a few families whose chief occupation is taking care of herds of buffaloes and wild cattle that range the waste, there is no fixed population in the Pontine Marshes. About the end of October, when the great heats of summer, which render the plain unhealthy, have ceased, the poor and laborious peasants of the Apennines come down from their mountains in bands, and perform the necessary labours. Some few stay till May, but in general they return as soon as they have finished their ploughing and sowing. At harvest-time, which occurs about the middle of June, they descend again to the low country, with their family and all their baggage and appurtenances.

I have before me an engraving copied from the design of Robert (in a collection recently published at Berlin), who has given the scene with admirable truth and nature. I have seen its very counterpart in crossing the Pontine Marshes; the same cumbrous cart, with its yoke of fierce-looking buffaloes, and its motley load; the same picturesque costumes, that make the women look as if they had walked out of a picture by some old Italian master; the same gambols, the same zampogna, or bagpipe, an instrument, by the way, quite as common in all the mountainous districts of southern Italy as ever it could have been in the Highlands of Scotland. It is common for a family to move with all its members, from the hoary grandfather to the infant in arms, and to carry all their simple household goods and moveable property with them. The senior of the party acts as “caporale,” or head man, arranges the job with the factor or farmer, and receives the wages of his children and grandchildren. When they reach the scene of their operations they unload their car, and sometimes set up a rude sort of tent to shade them at their meals, and protect them from the dews at night. This care, however, is not always taken, and many of them eat and sleep without any shelter, spreading their

blankets on the bare ground. They sometimes make temporary huts of bulrushes and canes, which grow to a prodigious height in the more marshy parts of the plain. Where the soil is very damp, I have sometimes seen these huts set upon poles at the height of six or eight feet from the ground. The occupants, who only use them for sleeping, climb up and enter by an aperture, which is rather a hole than a door-way: a structure of this kind looks like a gigantic bee-hive, or an Indian wigwam set upon stilts.

In the day-time, while the men and women are all at work, the children, where there are any, are carried afield, and set down on the ground near the reapers, for wolves are not unfrequent visitors in these marshes. The peculiar way of swaddling infants, which is common in all the south of the Peninsula, has not escaped our artist's attention. The little creatures are bound and wrapped round and round, until, in their lower extremities, they look like Egyptian mummies. Though this practice, by which the legs are confined and allowed no play, should not seem a very judicious one, the peasants, and the lazzaroni of Naples, among whom it is equally prevalent, are, generally speaking, a remarkably fine-legged generation. Spare is the food, and hard the life led by these poor mountaineers. Although, putting the best face on a bad business, they arrive piping and dancing, it is seldom that they can return in the same merry mood, the malaria fever being pretty sure to seize one-half of them more or less violently. As soon as the corn is cut, the reapers make all the haste they can from the pestilential flat, which, by the month of July, becomes so dangerous that few or none will venture to remain in the fields by night. The livid aspect of those few families that are bound to the spot is indeed a shocking proof of its unwholesomeness. We remember few things more pathetic than the reply that one of these walking spectres made to a traveller who was struck with the abundant sources of disease, and the sickly appearance of the people. "How do you manage to live here?" (*Come si vive qui*) said the stranger. "*Signor, si muore*"—"Sir,

we die." Yet some of our hurried, unreflecting tourists, who have recorded their follies in books, fly out furiously against the ill-looks of these poor people, which they attribute solely to moral causes, or to their own bad tempers and evil passions, instead of attributing them to bad food and worse air. The pestilential malaria, which destroys the liver, and jaundices the eyes, face, and the whole frame, is not very favourable to good and cheerful looks. Place the best favoured, heartiest, and honestest of our English peasantry in these regions, and they will soon die or look like these unfortunate denizens.

Some of the parties of reapers have many miles to travel before they reach their homes on the healthy mountains. They walk along in troops, the healthy supporting the sickly; for it is only a few of the better sort that can command the luxury of riding in a buffalo-car. These vehicles are of the most primitive or rudest description: one solid piece of wood, roughly hewed, forms axletree and axles, and upon this the wheels revolve with a fearful noise, of which our word "creaking" conveys no idea: they scream, shriek, and groan. I have often heard them at more than a mile's distance. The beasts that draw them are the most sulky and savage of all domesticated quadrupeds, and are sometimes known to throw down their driver and press him to death. The strength of this species of buffalo, which attains its highest perfection in the low marshy lands of the Roman and Neapolitan states, is, however, prodigious. A pair of them will draw an immense car heavily laden over the roughest roads, and across the bed of a river, if necessary, with the water over their shoulders. On such occasions they keep their snouts erect, and above the water, blowing like hippopotami. In many parts of the country, where there are no bridges to cross the numerous mountain streams, all communication would be interrupted at certain seasons of the year, if it were not for the strength and aquatic habits of these animals.

VENDEMMIA, OR VINTAGE.

IN the design before us Bartolommeo Pinelli (in art *Ultimus Romanorum*!) brings out, to the life, a few of those figures and incidents which render parts of the Vendemmia, or vintage, in the south of Italy so graceful, picturesque, and classical. This is a season of joy, hilarity, and frolic, in all countries where the vine grows and ripens its generous fruit in abundance; and nearly everywhere, some attempt, more or less happy, is made to get up some rural *Dionysia* (vintage feast) or some semi-classical masquerade, with songs and other allusions to the *Liber Pater*, the god of wine, the great Bacchus. But in Italy, and more particularly in the southern parts of that beautiful peninsula, where—in many secluded districts at least—the old Italic and Greco-Italic blood has been but comparatively little mingled with the blood of Goths or Visigoths, Huns or Lombards, Normans, or any other of the northern races, the successive conquerors of the country; where the classical ages fill as large a portion of the popular traditions as the Gothic or dark or middle ages occupy in the traditions of the northern nations, mixing copiously with religious rites, and the usages, ceremonies, and observances of domestic life, and giving their point to popular proverbs, and furnishing out the vocabulary of household words; where the constant view of ruined temples, aqueducts, amphitheatres, mutilated statues, vases covered with classical designs, and coins and medals dug up out of the earth, and a constant hearing of the names of towns and villages, mountains and streams, that have scarcely varied from their designation in the days of the Cæsars, all serve to remind the people of the remote times when the pagan mythology was not “a creed outworn,” but the popular



Vendemmia, or Vintage.

belief; these vintage feasts have a far more classical and earnest character. In minor particulars these very unlettered peasants not uncommonly travestie ancient characters. They invariably talk of Virgil, not as a poet, but as a mighty conjuror and necromancer, a sort of Friar Bacon or Michael Scott. Of Ovid (Ovidius Naso) they only pretend to know that he had a very big nose, and a skill in the black arts. Cicero, from an orator, statesman, philosopher, becomes in their parlance a synonyme for dandy, or for anything that is very fine: thus Castiglione tells us that he once heard a Roman peasant who was eulogizing his own jackass, exclaim in a rhapsody, "Ah! sirs, when he has got on his new pack-saddle, he looks like a very Cicero!" By another strange technical application of the word, every ragged illiterate rogue that acts as a guide and shows strangers the ancient sites and ruins is called a Cicero—*un Cicerone*. But though they never read mythology in books—for books of any kind are rarities among them, and very few or none of them can read—they are orally acquainted with the names of the gods and goddesses, and seldom make mistakes as to the characters and attributes of the higher divinities of the classical paganism: their traditions, and the ancient relics they see, almost with the force of reality or of a real belief, give to Jove his thunderbolt, and to Juno her chariot drawn by peacocks, her jealousy, and her scolding habits; to Mars his helmet and spear and the fate of battles, and to Venus, born of the sea, her matchless beauty of face and form; Ceres brings the ripe corn that waves in the field and gives sustenance to man, and Bacchus the wine that makes glad his heart. Of these two last fabled divinities they will almost talk as of their favourite or patron saints. From one end of Italy to the other there are few exclamations more frequently in the mouths of the common people than the "Per Bacco!" (by Bacchus), although, be it said to their credit, they are not often his votaries to any excess in drinking.

The Vendemmia, or Vintage, is a sort of rustic Carnival, or Saturnalia holiday, in which, from time immemorial, they have been accustomed to allow themselves,

and to be allowed by their masters and superiors, a degree of liberty as large as obtained among the common people of ancient Rome, when they commemorated the freedom and equality which prevailed on earth in the golden reign of Saturn. As long as it lasts, the peasants employed in it indulge in a truly Fescennine licence of tongue with all who approach or chance to pass by, bespattering them with all manner of queer language, and pelting them with doggrel rhymes, without any regard to their rank or condition. When the wine is all trodden out in the wine-press—trodden out by the naked feet of jumping, frolicking, roaring swains—the prime part of the festival commences, consisting generally of a semi-ludicrous, semi-serious, classical procession, and of a good repast at the end of it. On more than one occasion I have observed a rather nice attention to detail, and certain delicate distinctions which were scarcely to have been expected from an ignorant, unread peasantry.

One procession was really admirable. Bacchus, instead of being represented in the manner of our vulgar sign-painters, by a fat, paunchy, red-faced, drunken boy, was personified by the tallest, handsomest, and most graceful young man of the party; his head was crowned with a wreath of ivy and vine leaves, mixed with bunches of the purple grape, which hung down the sides and the back of his neck; in his right hand he carried a lance tipped with a cone of pine or fir-apple, and the shaft was entwined with ivy and vine leaves, and some wild autumnal flowers, the thing thus being, as nearly as might be, the classical thyrsus, one of the most ancient attributes of the god and his followers; a clean sheep's-skin, spotted with the red juice of the grape, in imitation of the skin of the panther or spotted pard which Bacchus is represented as wearing when he went on his expeditions, was thrown gracefully over his shoulders; he was followed by some silent, sedate women, carrying on their heads baskets filled with grapes; by little boys, carrying in their hands large bunches of the same fruit; by Bacchante of both sexes, who carried sticks entwined with vine leaves; by two or three *carri*,

or carts, which had been used to convey the ripe fruit to the wine-press, each drawn by a pair of tall cream-coloured oxen, with those large, dark, pensive eyes to which Homer thought it no disparagement to compare the eyes of the wife of Jupiter; and in the rear of all came Silenus, a fat old man with his face and hands besmeared with wine-lees, bestriding a fat old ass. The Bacchante bounded, danced, frolicked, and laughed uproariously; Silenus lolled and rolled upon his donkey, singing snatches of Vendemmia songs, making all sorts of ludicrous grimaces and gestures, and jocosely yet loudly abusing every stranger or neighbour he discovered in the throng. But Bacchus preserved the decorum and dignity of the true classical character of the god who was as graceful as Apollo, who shared with that divinity the dominion of Parnassus, and the faculty and glory of inspiring poets with immortal verse. The joyous shouts of *Viva Bacco! Viva la Vendemmia!* the laughs and shouts of the Bacchante, the songs and jokes of old Silenus, were mingled with the beat and jingle of two or three tambourines, with the rural sound of cow-horns, and occasionally with the blasts of a cracked but antique-looking trumpet, and with the clapping of hands and shoutings of all the men and women, boys and girls of the district. The Cæcuban hills, which bore the fruit productive of the generous wine which Horace extolled as the drink of Mæcenas, and which render as good wine now, though all unknown to fame, as they did in the days of Augustus Cæsar, echoed and re-echoed with the joyous sounds, for the scene of the festivity was at the foot of those hills, on whose sunny slopes the vines had ripened which furnished this happy vintage.

When questioned as to how they arranged their very classical procession, the peasants could only say that they did as they had done year after year, and as their fathers and grandfathers had done before them. The *Parocchio*, or parish priest, who thought it no sin or degradation to follow the procession and partake in the feast, did not appear to have much more learning on the subject.

RITORNO DELLA VENDEMMIA.—RETURN- ING FROM THE VINTAGE.

I HAVE already given some accounts of the Vendemmia, or vintage.

But it is a large and joyous subject, full of striking incidents and pictures, and very rich in classical associations. In the present design Bartolommeo Pinelli gives a group of grape-gatherers and wine-pressers returning to Rome from their completed labours in the Vigne, or vineyards. At the proper season, after the ripening of the luscious grapes on the hill-sides, or a week or two before,—for, generally speaking, the grape to be turned into wine must not be too ripe—such groups are frequently encountered, coming in from the different colline or hills in the neighbourhood of Rome that are most favourable to the growth of the vine. At times they come from considerable distances; but whether their journey be a long or a short one, they always contrive to come to the Tiber and into the renowned old city dancing and singing. When the distance from the vineyard is short, they will generally dance the whole way, only taking little rests between to refresh themselves with some bunches of the grapes they had been gathering, or with a little of the last year's wine and a slice or two of bread made of the Grannone, or Indian corn. If you stop and ask them whence they came, the chance is that your ear will be charmed by some classical name, or, with only a trifling alteration, by the very name of some place of which you have read in the ancient Roman poets and historians. And all round about Rome there is scarcely a river, brook, lake, mountain, or hill but retains its ancient name, nor is there a rock without a name. The “*nulla sine nomine saxum*” may still be repeated, and hardly is there a rock among them all but is famed in



The Return from the Vintage.—From Pinelli.

poetry, history, or tradition. Say to these vintage people, "*Donde Venite?*" Whence come you? and the reply will probably be, "*Veniamo da Velletri*," We come from Velletri (the Velitræ of antiquity, that most important of all the cities of the Volsci, against whom Coriolanus waged his glorious warfare), or "We come from the hills of Albano," or "We have been gathering grapes on the hills of Palestrina" (the ancient Præneste), or "We come from the hills by Lake Nemi," or "We have been filling the wine-vats at Baccano," or "We come from Tivoli" (the Tibur of Horace). Or perhaps they are dancing from the hills of Veii, that once populous Etruscan city, which stood as long a siege by the Romans as Old Troy did by the Greeks, and within the almost obliterated circuit of which the shepherd now leads his flock as in the days of Propertius:—

"Nunc intra muros pastoris buccina lenti
Cantat, et in vestris ossibus arva metunt."*

And you meet these joyous vintagers dancing on those ancient Roman roads, the Via Appia, the Via Flaminia, or the Via Valeria, which not only bear unchanged their old names, but which are still in many places paved with the large rough stone blocks which the conquerors of the world laid upon them, while here and there you find the ancient milestones erect and with their inscriptions unefaced. Or if these people have been working nearer home, they are perhaps dancing from the Aventine Mount, or from the Viminal, or from the hills which slope down to the grotto and fount of Ægeria, where the Roman lawgiver met by night his friendly nymph and monitress,

"—— ubi nocturnæ Numa constituebat amicæ."†

Some of the women and children of these vintagers are always loaded with the beautiful purple grape; and very

* Lib. iv. Eleg. x.—"Now within the walls the horn of the herdsman sounds slowly, and they reap the fields among your bones."

† Juvenal, Lib. i. Sat. iii.

often, when the nature of the road allows it, there is in the van of the procession or Bacchanalian dance a lofty carro, filled within with the simple household utensils of those who have been working at a distance from their homes, but covered overhead with bunches of grapes hanging from tall hoops, or tastefully festooned between tall vine-poles. The large, sedate, cream-coloured oxen which draw the car have wreaths round their necks or chaplets thrown on their horns, and it is considered an appropriate *grazia* or grace that they should bear on their neck or chest some broad stains of the ruby wine. Some of the men carry large torches made of the wood of the pine, which was equally sacred to Bacchus and to Neptune, and which, from its resinous nature, burns freely and makes a good blaze. These pine torches are almost facsimiles of those used in the ancient sacrifices and festivals, and of which we find such frequent representations in ancient sculpture. The men carry them with a truly classical grace. They are for the most part borne erect; but at times, as at the conclusion of a dance, or upon coming in sight of their houses or their parish church, they are waved in the air overhead with triumphant shouts, and

“ — all the people follow with great glee,
Shouting and clapping all their hands on height,
That all the air it fills, and flies to heaven bright.”*

The Fescennine licence of language, and the rough jokes, often too practical to be pleasant, which we have mentioned in speaking of our dear friend Policinella,† are left behind in the vineyards and winepresses, where all the dancing consists of jumping with naked feet on the gathered grapes (the only process by which the juice is expressed for the making of the wine), and the peasants now only exhibit their best dancing to the accompaniment of their cheerfulest and best music; and if the stranger is now and then assailed with a jest as he passes the merry group, it is but a smooth and harmless jest. The Vendemmia dance in itself is far

* Spenser, ‘Faery Queen.’

† See present volume, article on the Burattini.

from being deficient in natural grace and elegance. The picture is generally beautifully and warmly coloured, for reds, scarlets, crimsons, and all the brightest hues are found in the dress of the peasantry. Doubtlessly the classicality of the costume is impaired somewhat by the men's hats, knee-breeches, and enormous shoe-buckles. For the last-named articles—the remembrance of which is wearing out in England after thirty or forty years of desuetude—the country-people, as well of the Roman States as of the Neapolitan Kingdom, have an extraordinary liking, and the bigger and clumsier they are the more they seem to their taste. If the bright metal of the buckle covers the whole instep and reaches nearly to the extremity of the great toe, it is the more admired. The women reckon their fortune by the number of woollen mattresses, rings, ear-rings and gold chains they may possess; the property of a man is often estimated by his shoe-buckles and walking-stick. A poor fellow who wished to impress me with a high notion of one of his neighbours' substance and well doing in the world, told me that the said neighbour's buckles weighed half-a-pound, and were of solid silver, and that he never went out of a holiday without carrying a gold-headed cane. Indeed the expression "*Porta fibbie d'argento e bastoncino d'oro*," or "He wears silver buckles and carries a gold walking-stick," is a common idiom in the Neapolitan Kingdom, signifying that the man of whom so much is predicated is in the enjoyment of worldly prosperity. I am speaking in the present tense; but, alack! great changes, I am told, are taking place and have taken place since I sauntered away a happy time in the sunny South. This transition state encourages me to multiply these little recollections and memoranda. Such things are not recorded in histories, and are seldom mentioned even in books of travels. In a few more years they will have ceased to exist; and in the manners and habits of men there is nothing that is, or that has been, but is worthy of some preservation.

My good-natured old Roman priest, who dabbled in antiquarianisms and in poetry, being a member of the Roman Archæological Society, and holding a crook

among the Arcadian Shepherds as well, endeavoured to explain to me that the procession of the returning vintagers, with their dancing and music and burning torches, was nothing but a lineal descendant or representative of the triumphal march of the God Bacchus while he was subduing India and all the regions of the remote East. "Look at our ancient bassi rilievi," said he, "and there you will see counterparts or prototypes of this scene—Bacchus, who was the inventor of triumphs, seated in a triumphal car, and attended by women dancing, men brandishing torches,—the panthers and tigers are out of our picture because (thanks to the Saints for that blessing) we have none in these parts; and the men and women are well covered with clothes, as decency requires: but you will see that all the rest is very like, and perfectly classical."

But my good old friend was seldom at a loss in tracing these resemblances, or in finding ancient and classical reasons for modern usages. "Why," said I to him one day, as we were passing a fine flock of domestic geese that were waddling along one of the banks of the Tiber, "why do your people in the south of Italy never eat this bird, which is esteemed very good food in France, England, Germany, and most other countries?" He put his forefinger between his eyebrows, and thought for a while; but he soon replied, "*Vi dirò il perchè*—I will tell you why. Ever since that memorable and finest night when the geese saved the Capitol from the Gauls, they have been held as sacred birds." I objected to this derivation of the custom, that the peasants treated the geese with very little respect, and at times with great barbarity, roughly stripping them, while alive, of their quills to sell for pens, and of their feathers to put into cushions and pillows; and that none of them knew the story about the Gauls, the geese, and the Capitol. "This may be," said he, "but the story must have been at one time known to all Rome at least; and so the usage has descended to them through a long inheritance, and is not a bit the less binding through their ignorance of its origin." To the other objection I raised out of the silence of ancient writers, my

antiquary replied by asking me who knew whether the sanctification of the geese had not been given in some of the missing books of Livy, or in some other of the innumerable writings of ancient authors which have been lost for ever? There was no disputing the point with him; and I confessed to the never having investigated it. All that I know about it is, that, although the bird was by no means scarce, no Roman or Neapolitan peasant would, in my time, eat of a tame goose. Great black snakes I have seen fried and eaten both in Calabria and in Sicily; and the flesh of the wolf was not rarely put upon the table by the poor peasants of Lucania, Samnium, and Sabina—but gooseflesh did I never see upon table or platter. The feast of St. Michael is celebrated as becomes so great a Saint; but it is Michaelmas without Goose.

On the confines of the Roman States I was told of a district where the people, in their vintage feasts, masked themselves with queer masks made of cork or bark, and suspended little figures on their tallest trees, while they sang old songs in honour of Bacchus. This must approach very nearly to the realization or continuance of a vintage scene in Virgil.

“Nec non Ausonii, Troja gens missa colni,” &c.

Or,

“Th’ Ausonian peasants who from Troy descend,
Now uncouth verses with loud laughter blend,
And with bark-masks, all rude and comical,
On thee, o Bacchus! joyfully they call
And hang their votive puppets on the pine-tree tall.”

* Georgics, ii. 385.

ROMAN AND NEAPOLITAN PEASANTRY, COSTUMES, AND CUSTOMS.

BARTOLOMMEO PINELLI, who designed the various groups of brigands which are so well known, delineated with the same spirit and truthfulness the sports and pastimes, the costumes and the striking customs of the peasantry of the Roman States, where, in many respects, the living population bear the impress of antiquity, and are probably but little changed from what the people were

“ When he from Troy
Went up the Tiber.”

The difference in costume between one district and another leads back to the time when the Campagna of Rome, and the hills that gird it, were divided into a number of small, separate, and independent states ; and in some few cases it marks as clearly the extent of those miniature republics, or patriarchal kingdoms, as they could be marked by Cluverius or the most learned on the subject of ancient geography. Each of these districts preserves its own costume distinct from that of its neighbours, and not the slightest change or variation is allowed in it. What we call ‘fashion’ is an arbiter utterly unknown among the peasantry of the south of Italy. Every man, and every woman too, dress precisely as their father and mother had done before them, and as their progenitors had dressed for ages. In some of the most rural districts there seems to have been scarcely the slightest change either in fashion or material since the days of the Cæsars, or the days of the first consuls, or the still remoter times of the kingly rulers : the coats of the men are undressed sheep-skins with the

fleece on them, and the rest of their attire is made of flax cultivated in their own fields, spun with the distaff, and woven with a loom quite as simple as any that could have been in use even in the days of Homer, by their own women. In several parts of the Campagna of Rome the dresses of both sexes are identically the same as we see represented in bassi-rilievi and other sculptures in the Vatican, or in the great gallery at Florence, or in the splendid museum at Naples, so rich with the spoils of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The same antiquity or identity of costume is found in innumerable districts of the Neapolitan kingdom; but the most striking instance I remember was one that fell under my own observation at Pæstum. In making some slight excavations near those glorious old temples:—

“They stand between the mountains and the sea;
Awful memorials, but of whom we know not!”*

—that were ancient edifices before the time of the first of the Cæsars, the workmen discovered a great many female figures beautifully executed in fine clay, or terra cotta, and the costume of these figures, which must have been lying buried at that spot for some two thousand years, was the same, without the slightest variation, as the dress of the living female peasantry of the district. Thus in traversing the country which was anciently the abode of the Lucanians, the Brutii, the Apulians, the Samnites, the Volscians, the Latini, the Veians, &c., the traveller may fancy that the thin and scattered population present to the eye nearly the same appearances as the occupants of those regions presented to their Roman conquerors centuries before the Christian era; may, in the midst of ruined temples and amphitheatres, aqueducts and tombs, flatter his imagination that all things have not perished under the tooth of time; that the most ancient customs have been preserved, in spite of foreign conquests, wars, and devastations; the heart and affections of man, his predilections and

* Rogers's Italy.



Roman Peasantry.—From Pinelli.

habits being so much stronger than the strongest work of his hands.

In the present design, Pinelli, as he usually did, unites a custom with costume. The little children in the basket, carried on the heads of the female peasants, who might pass for Roman wives of the time of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, are placed and carried in a manner peculiar to one or two districts only of the Campagna of Rome. At least we never observed the curious practice in any other part of Italy. The baskets made of osiers that grow by the yellow Tiber, or the streams with classical names that fall into it, or that in too many cases run wild over the solitary waste, to form the Pontine Marshes and malaria, are lined inside with rough cotton or uncombed wool, that the little bantlings may lie softly and comfortably, while, to prevent their throwing themselves out, the basket is crossed at the top by narrow bands of platted straws or small osiers. The little urchins, in short, are secured nearly in the same way as our stone jars are secured in hampers. With her infant on her head in one of these curious baskets, a *paesana* will trudge for miles to fair or market, or to take part in the labours of the field, much too large a portion of which falls to the females in Italy; or to tend the flock, or to go to mass on a Sunday or saint's day. We have seen them, when the infant has been sleeping and perfectly still, take their distaffs from their girdle, and go along spinning and singing, balancing the basket on their heads without any help from the hands, and apparently without any exertion. Water is nearly always carried home from the fountain or the rivulet in the same manner; and then the hands are never used except to put the vase or vessel upon the head. The women of India have this last fashion of carrying water; and various English artists have delineated their graceful elastic forms, and the easy and seemingly instinctive way in which they balance and carry their large light vessels. In the south of Italy these vases, as I have said, are often found of the graceful, and truly antique forms; and nothing can exceed the ease and gracefulness of some

of those who are seen bearing them. The material is generally of the coarsest kind ; but would that our Staffordshire potters adopted their elegance of forms !

There was one fine young woman that I used frequently to notice at Rome some years ago. She was what they called, in their language, which calls almost everything by a fine or sonorous name, a 'Corriere,' or Courier, her occupation simply being to bring letters, or messages, or small parcels, or a basket of fowls or quails, as it might be, from a village at the foot of the hills, an offset of the Apennines, and to carry back from Rome other letters, messages, or parcels. She was, in short, postwoman and carrier united, and the only medium of communication between her lonely village and the eternal city. Twice or thrice a week, under the burning sun of July, or under the deluge-like rains of September, this hard-toiling woman made two journeys a week to and from Rome, her village being some sixteen or eighteen miles from the city, and always she carried her last-born child in the basket on her head, disposing of all her other articles in a light open wicker basket which she carried in her hand. The poor creature (but we doubt whether the term ought to be applied to one possessed of ruddy health, a laughing eye, a most buoyant and queen-like step, and a look that seemed to say, 'Labour is light when we toil for those we love') used, on arriving at the city, to suckle her child by one of the gates, then leave it in charge of an old woman, and go and execute all her little commissions. Generally, in the evening of the same day she was seen taking her departure, loaded as she came, with her little one on her head, her wicker basket in her hand, and the traveller's benison going with her—"May the blessed Virgin accompany thee on thy road !"

Another of Bartolommeo Pinelli's designs of mingled customs and costumes exhibits the picturesquely attired peasant-women from some village on the hills which gird in the Roman Campagna and the Pontine Marshes. The style of the head-drapery—which consists simply of a broad linen napkin or towel gracefully folded, and with



Roman Peasantry.

or without a fringe—is common to many districts throughout the south of Italy, though by no means to all of them. In ordinary cases the fringe is but a loosened

part of the linen napkin; but the better-conditioned of these paesane often display on Saints' days and *Giorni di Festa* (holidays) fringes made of silk and gold thread. Although they call it by the very homely and unpoetical name of towel (*tovaglia*,* whence we have derived our word, or the name of the thing with which we wipe our hands and faces), or by the name of *il panno* (the cloth): this female adornment figures conspicuously in the popular amatory poetry. The love-smitten Roman or Neapolitan swain sings of it, when describing the charms and graces of his *bell' idolo*, as our primitive English and Scottish song-makers used to sing of the "flowing auburn hair," "lint-white locks," the blue ribbons to tie up the bonnie hair, the snood, &c. But these southern swains are often very bold, figurative, and almost Oriental in their language, making a great deal more of their fair one's linen towel than our songsters and sonneteers ever ventured to make of flowing hair or silken ribbon. I have heard them compare the towel to a ship or sail at sea, to a summer cloud, to a comet, a star, the moon, the froth and foam on the sea-shore, the snow on the mountain-top, the glory round the head of a Saint, the very head-gear of the blessed Madonna herself, that

"Maid, yet mother,
Goddess, yet woman—like none other,
That still remembereth in Heaven
The heart—the hopes to woman given."

We remember hearing an amorous or musical peasant from the old hill-town of Capaccio, singing on the shady side of one of the massy columns of the Pæstan Greek temples, and using this bold figure, in his Neapolitan patois—

"Deh! quando tu metti 'sta tovaglia bionna,
Mi pari un' antenna in auto mare!"

* *Tovaglia* is not provincial or patois, but good Tuscan. But in Tuscan it signifies nothing but a towel. The Romans, if I remember right, often call the *tovaglia* or *panno*, *la pezzuola*, which, in pure della Crusca Italian, signifies the pocket-handkerchief.

“ Ah! when you put on your white* towel,
You seem to me a ship on the high sea!”

These rustic verses are transmitted orally from generation to generation, and are preserved solely by memory: neither type and press, nor even pen being employed to keep them from oblivion and give them what poets call immortality. They have, in short, been preserved like most of our nursery rhymes, and, like some of those simple productions, many of them are evidently of considerable antiquity, and are likely to remain in the popular mind for ages to come. Some of them, not of the amatory kind, are not much to be commended. The song most in vogue among the *lazzaroni* of Naples is all about *catching fleas*—an art in which they have great practice, and in which they have attained to a rare degree of skill. As Mr. Halliwell has made an incomplete collection of our nursery rhymes, so several Italians have made partial collections of their popular songs, writing them down from memory, or taking them from the lips of the singers. We believe that the best of these collections is the one published about ten years ago by the Cavalier Visconti, entitled ‘*Canti Popolari della Marittima e della Campagna*;’ † but even this is very incomplete, and is confined to a small part of the Roman States. It does not include the Marches of Ancona, or Umbria, or the most mountainous parts of the States of the Church; and we have generally observed in Italy, as in other countries, that the inhabitants of mountainous regions are more addicted to music and song and tradition than are the dwellers in plains. The Neapolitan collections we have seen are confined

* The word *bionna* (in Tuscan, or pure Italian, *bionda*) of course means *light brown* or *blonde*; but as the linen head-napkin is always bleached, and generally kept clean and of a snowy whiteness, our Capaccio friend must have turned *bianca* (white) into *bionna* for the sake of a rhyme.

† The Marittima is that part of the Roman States which lies on the Mediterranean (not the Adriatic) shore; the Campagna is the Campania of Rome, which stands between the Mediterranean and the mountains, including the lower ranges of the latter.

almost entirely to the Canti Popolari of the city of Naples, the Campagna Felice, and the rest of the province of the Terra di Lavora ; but every other province, and nearly every district in it, have, together with a distinctive costume for their women, some particular song or songs of their own. There are a few canti or canzoni that are sung all over the Neapolitan kingdom. Among these are the well-known Tarentella, beginning

“Sei bella, sei buona, sei tutt’ amorosa ;” *

and the droller ditty,

“La luna sta in miezzo lo mare,
Mamma mia maritime tu !
Figgia mia che t’ aggio à dare ?
Mamma mia pensaci tu.
E la luna sta in miezzo lo mare !” &c.

“The moon is in the middle of the sea :
Mamma mine, get me a husband !—
Daughter mine, whom have I to give thee ?—
Mamma mine, think of that yourself.
And the moon is in the middle of the sea !”

Except Mr. Charles Matthews—the clever son of a clever father—who has resided in the south of Italy, and whose other imitations of the strange manners of the Neapolitans (including that of their tarentella or national dance) are all perfect in their kind, I never met with the foreigner that could do tolerable justice to these strange wild popular songs, or sing them as they are sung by the common people in the land of the vine, the myrtle, and maccheroni. A traveller might spend his time worse than in collecting these primitive, inedited, unprinted compositions, throughout the Peninsula ; but the task would require a perfect familiarity with the humorous and numerous patois or dialects of Italy, for, in this particular, as well as in the costume of the women, there is some variety or difference in nearly every district ;

* Thou art beautiful, thou art good, thou art all amorous, or made to be beloved.

while, between the Piedmontese and Milanese in Upper Italy, and the Neapolitan and Calabrian in Lower Italy, and the dialect of Sicily, the difference is so great as almost to make the dialects appear distinct languages. The Milanese have made more than one collection of the popular songs in their own patois; and a collection of Sicilian songs, of the rudest and most primitive sort, but with occasional beauties mingled with their quaintness, was published a few years ago at Palermo. But in addition to these old household verses, the productions of unknown and unnamed peasants, the Sicilians possess—also in their own beautiful dialect, in which the soft and sweet Italian is made softer and sweeter still by the multiplication of the softest-sounding of the vowels—the exquisite, the classical songs, pastorals, and piscatory eclogues of the Abbate Meli, whose verses are more honeyed than his name, and who, more than any writer in any language, merits the designation of “the modern Theocritus,” which his admiring countrymen, and the Italians generally, have long bestowed upon him. Meli was no cold and pedantic imitator of the Greek and Latin poets; his pictures are all pictures from real life—from the shepherds and husbandmen he saw on his own native hills and in his own familiar valleys, and the fishermen and mariners on the bold Sicilian coasts—and they are as true and faithful in their way as those of our great painter of humble life, Crabbe. His love-songs, in the vernacular dialect, are familiar to every Sicilian, however lowly and unlettered be his condition; and they have all been set to music for the favourite native instrument, the guitar.* His Doric notes, as compared to the Tuscan, or pure Italian, are like Burns’s sweetest and softest Scotch compared with our standard English. But the song upon a paesana’s head-cloth has led me into a digression.

In some districts the *tovaglia*, or *panno*, is raised con-

* Meli died, at an advanced age, in 1815, shortly after collecting and publishing an edition of his works, in seven volumes.

siderably from the head, and is kept in its position by a large silver pin or bodkin from twelve to fifteen inches long, and ornamented at one end by being wrought into the shape of the feather end of an arrow, or into some other graceful form. The most beautiful and the most perfect specimens of these head-dresses are to be seen in the islands of Ischia and Procida.

Next to the head-gear the holiday boddice of the paesane is most noticeable and most picturesque. This part of the attire is often tastefully embroidered, and the material of the embroidery is not unfrequently gold or silver thread of the purest kind. And it is curious to observe that in their rings, ear-rings, and other ornaments, the poorest of these peasantry, if they possess any such things at all, have them always made of the purest gold or silver that can be procured. The workmanship is often rough, but the material is always rich. Our powerfully alloyed jeweller's gold, whatever might be the beauty of the workmanship, would excite the contempt of these humble matrons. These facts were well known to the lawless soldiery of Bonaparte, and many a marauding Frenchman lost his life for having insulted these women and for having torn the massive gold ear-rings from their ears and their rings from their fingers. When the wars of the French revolution succeeded half a century of peace and prosperity, the better class of the Italian peasantry were well provided with these and other feminine ornaments; and few were the houses without a little plate for the table, or without its silver crucifix. Wars and revolutions, a constantly increasing taxation, and impolitic restrictions upon the freedom of trade, have swept away most of these indications of prosperity; but still, far more remains than a hasty observer would be inclined to believe. The way to judge of the fact is to attend some of the great rural festivals, when every paesana displays all the finery she possesses. I have seen, in some of the remotest districts of the Roman and Neapolitan states, on these hard-working and hard-faring peasant women more gold ear-rings and rings than would have filled the bushel measures which Hannibal

is said to have filled with the rings of the Roman knights and consuls that fell in the disastrous battle of Cannæ. They generally descend from generation to generation as a sort of heir-looms. Some of them show by their workmanship, and by the consumption of the gold, which long wear and friction have occasioned, that they have not been made in our days, but have been worn by those who have long been dead and forgotten. When a young *paesana* marries, a list is taken of such articles as she brings with her to her husband; and in the provinces nearest to the city of Naples it used to be a common thing to insert in the simple marriage contract an obligation on the part of the *sposo* to conduct his *sposa* every year to two or more noted festivals (leaving ten or a dozen others to chance, or to the goodman's good-will or pleasure), where one of the lady's greatest delights would be to display her gold and her corals, her best head-dress and her embroidered boddice. The most noted of all these festivals (which, though accompanied with singing and dancing, eating and drinking, and with a shouting and noise which must be heard to be understood, have all originated in and are connected with some saint or Madonna worship, or some religious ceremony) is that of the Madonna of Piè di Grotta, which is held in the city of Naples, or rather in the Posilippo suburb of that densely peopled capital, close by the entrance of that grotta or tunnel which the earliest Greek conquerors and colonists cut through the tufa mountain of Posilippo to open an easy road from Naples to the ancient town of Pozzuoli, the still more ancient Cumæ, where the Sibyl had temple and mysterious shrine, and to the matchless coast, where, at a later period, the Roman patricians, the richest and most luxurious conquerors of the world, built the town of Baïæ, and raised those splendid marine villas whose basements are now seen deep under the surface of the water of the bay. The pencil of Mr. Uwins has made the walls of English houses and galleries live and glow with some of the joyous, sunny scenes of this far-famed festival, and has familiarised untravelled Englishmen with some of the pastimes of Piè di Grotta; but it

would require many pencils and a great variety of talent and artistic power to do any thing like full justice to that festival of festivals.

One of the greatest charms of the great Neapolitan feste arises out of the variety of the costumes of the women, and the distinctive style and character of each. A practised eye—any person who has rambled about the country with his eyes open—can tell, by the costume, the district, the mountain, hill, or valley, or the sea-shore, town, or village, or the island from which each of the commingling groups have come to enjoy this *giorno beato*, this blessed day! What we call fashion is utterly unknown to these paesane; every woman dresses precisely as her mother and grandmother did before her; and one district never adopts or copies from the costume of another. That custom of wearing the cast-off worn-out clothes of their betters or their superiors in the adventitious circumstances of rank and fortune, which too often gives such a beggarly, incongruous, grotesque appearance to our own peasantry, and which commonly drives all their native picturesqueness from the Irish peasantry, is equally unknown to these Italian peasants, whether males or females. An Englishwoman may be seen making hay in a tattered muslin dress that has once been worn by a duchess or a countess or other modish dame; and nothing so common as to see an Irishman driving pigs in what was once the exquisitely-cut coat of a dandy, or the black, trim coat of a clergyman. But a Roman or a Neapolitan peasant, or any man or woman of any of the rural districts of Italy, would no more think of wearing such things, or putting on any dress except such as belongs to their condition and locality, than they would think of tattooing themselves and going without any garments at all. A paesana would consider that she was degraded and disgraced, that her caste was lost, and her reputation gone for ever, if once she were forced to show herself in the dress (whether span new or cast-off) of a city madam, or in any other attire excepting that which her mother had worn and taught her to make. Perhaps there is some close connection between these ancient and

deep-rooted feelings and the superior quality of the rags which we import from Italy for our paper manufactures. There the rags do not go through the wear and tear of many successive grades and conditions, ending with the lowest and poorest of all. In England the old-clothes men are mortal foes to propriety of costume; and when an old coat has gone through every gradation here, a lower still is found in the sister island, and it is shipped off for the land of the shamrock and shillelagh.*

* The most curious exportation, or the most curious use made of the article exported, I ever heard of, was this:—Our dealers in cast-off things or second-hand commodities (and Foote was wont to say that a coffin was the only thing that could not be bought and sold second-hand in England) were at a loss to know where to find a market for second-hand judges' and lawyers' wigs. A skipper engaged in the coast of Guinea trade thought that the negro-chiefs might like them. He took out a few. Never did small speculation turn out better! The negroes were all mad for the wigs; and other shipments were soon made. My informant saw a meeting of negroes, where every chief, naked in all save that and a clout round his waist, wore a flowing wig, which had once done duty on some learned pate in Westminster Hall. For all that I know to the contrary, this trade with the negroes in cast-off wigs may still be going on in full force.

NATURAL FOUNTAINS IN THE NEIGH- BOURHOOD OF ROME.

OF the Fontana di Trevi, or the other great public fountains which give magnificence, and beauty, and coolness to the city of Rome, I say nothing. They have been well described by Eustace, and have had the charms of poetry and romance thrown over them by Madame de Staël. I speak only of the founts and swelling streams which are the special resorts of the peasantry. These are numerous in the hilly country behind Rome, and simple, unostentatious, and unadorned by art, as Juvenal, in his time, wished the grotta of Egeria to be. In the bosom of the hills about Tivoli and Albano, and Castel Gandolfi, and on the lower ridges of the towering Apennines, which slope off into the bleak Abruzzi, the pedestrian traveller may come suddenly upon secluded fountains which seem to have served Ovid for his description of the natural mirror in which Narcissus gazed himself to death.

*Fons erat illimis, nitidis argenteus undis,
Quem neque pastores neque pastæ monte capellæ
Contigerant aliudve pecus : etc.**

or,

Pure from all soil, the silver fountain made
A mirror, picturing forth the pendent glade ;
No trampling herd, stray kid, or, ruder still,
Shepherd or Shepherd's crook, disturb'd the rill :
Nor drooping branch, nor plume of bird unclean,
Nor leaf deciduous in the lake serene
Ruffled its smoothness. All around was spread
The freshest verdure, by its moisture fed :

* Metamor. III. 407.

Above, impervious to the noon-tide beam.
A sheltered wood o'ercanopied the stream.

No inconsiderable portion of the life of a Roman *paesana* is spent at the fountain, or brook, or river-side. Thither she goes morning and evening, for the supply of water necessary for her family uses; there she washes her own and her husband's and children's clothes, and there oftentimes on the Sunday or Saint's day morning she completes her festal toilette, making the clear water supply the place of a mirror. There too she meets her neighbours and talks over the events of the day, the humble but not always unexciting occurrences of the district (for the brigands are sometimes abroad, or an old feud has broken out between this village and that, and blows have been given and knives drawn, or some wild buffaloes of the Pontine Marshes have been killing their herdsmen). The fountain is to the women what (in the larger villages) the barber's shop is to the men—the place for sauntering and gossiping. [In the days of old Rome the barbers were the greatest gossips, and their shops the great gossiping places of Rome. They are so still. But the people of better condition—*i galantuomini*—in the small towns and villages, where there are no coffee-houses, congregate and gossip in the *spezierie*, or apothecaries' shops.] Every evening some group or other is found collected round the spot. The earthen vases, often so graceful and so classical in their outline, are deposited upon the stone brink, to be filled, one after the other, and the women, giving themselves up to the genius of the place, discourse volubly, and faster than the water flows. Now and then the picture is improved by the arrival of some hind with his tall cream-coloured oxen "fatigued with the plough," or of a shepherd or goatherd with his flock, or of some muleteer that stops to slake his thirst and refresh his mules, or of the collecting lay-brother of some Franciscan, Capuchin, or other monastery of the mendicant orders, who is on his way homeward, and must be home before the bells have done chiming the 'Ave-Maria,' but who, nevertheless, must find time to take his *bisaccia*, or begging-bag, from his shoulders (well or ill-filled according to his luck, per-

suasiveness, or circumstances), to rest himself for a while, and commune with the matrons and damsels clustering round the fountain. Scenes of this sort constantly present themselves in the Roman states and the Neapolitan kingdom, as also in the south of Spain (where many of the fountains are works of the Moors) and (only with some trifling differences) in Greece, Turkey, and all through the East. The fountain, or the well—like that outside of the town of Samaria, to which the woman with her water-pot came to draw water, when “Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat on the well,”—is, in all these countries, found outside of nearly every town and village. It is here, after the heat of the day, that the village gossips congregate, “*Cum tibi sol tepidus plures admoverit aures,*” or when the cooling sun calls forth most listeners.

In the Roman states many of the fountains—though the stone-work be injured and the sculpture on them defaced—are at least as ancient as the days of Horace, are shaded by the tree he so much admired (the ilex), and are worthy altogether of the praise bestowed on the Fons Bandusiae, whose water, clearer than glass (*splendidior vitro*), gushed, with a cooling sound, through hollow rocks. As the bright but brief twilight fades away, the women, collecting their washed clothes or balancing their vases on their heads, walk homeward with an erect gait, the gossips suspend their long stories, and singly, or in little groups, the parties disappear, with their *Santa Notte!* or “Good (or holy) night to you!”

Another district uncommonly rich in fountains, with the most picturesque accessories, is beyond the Neapolitan frontier in the long, winding valley of the river Volturno, the Vulturnus of the Roman poets and historians.

Descending by that valley from the Abruzzi towards Capua and Naples, or following the route which Hannibal and his Carthaginians once took, you pass through the ancient town of Isernia, which was famed in the Social War, and through the still more ancient town of

Venafrò, where the flesh of the wild boar is as plentiful and as savoury as it was eighteen hundred years ago when Horace sang of it. You also pass by or under various quaint old villages which stand on the acclivities or summits of the mountains on either side the river and valley, and which partially occupy the sites of towns of the Samnites. Some of these villages exhibit traces of their ancient Samnite walls and towers, or present the picturesque ruins of feudal castles, and all those which stand on the mountains' sides have one or more old fountains, filled by some of the innumerable springs which rush from the rocks and trickle down to the Volturno. In Isernia there are three or four public fountains, enclosed and decorated with the common native marble. At Venafrò, which lies on a much lower level, at the foot of a wooded mountain and only a short distance from the right bank of the river, the fountains are more numerous. And here a local peculiarity enhances the beauty of the scene. At Venafrò, and in no other town in the kingdom that I ever visited, the women make use of large copper vases for drawing and carrying home their water from the fountain. These vessels are gracefully shaped, and are kept as clean and bright as burnished gold. The women—the fair sex are always the water-drawers in these regions—carry the vases on their heads, nicely balancing them, and never using their hands and arms except to put the vase on their crowns and then to remove it at their journey's end. And, in this manner, the maids and matrons of Venafrò will carry a vessel full of water, over rough, rocky roads or paths, and up the steep side of the hill on which good part of the town is built, without spilling a drop of the water. As the costume of the district is pre-eminently picturesque, and the Venafritanes are unusually well-favoured and well-made women, the moving picture at eventide is altogether charming. The last time I arrived at that antique and most romantic town was on a glorious summer evening, nigh upon the Ave-Maria. The day had been excessively hot. I had been almost baked or broiled on my horse in riding from the town of Castel di Sangro (where towers

and frowns the most picturesque ruin of a baronial castle that eye ever beheld) and across the bare rocky ridge which separates the valley of the river Sangro from that of the Volturno. But as I descended into the latter valley, a few miles below Isernia, I got again into verdure and a most refreshing and delicious coolness. The rapid current of the Volturno, which, throughout its course, is one of the quickest of rivers, created or carried along with it a corresponding current of fresh air; a thousand little brooks and streamlets, fed at their sources by the melting snow of the loftier and more distant mountains ran foaming and sparkling down the hills towards the river, as if they were racing to see which should be the first to reach it; some boys were driving home flocks of frolicksome goats from the thymy hills, and the hinds who had been a-field were returning into the town with their very primitive implements of agriculture over their shoulders. As I rode by them every man's hand was to his sugar-loaf hat, and a short salutation on every tongue. As I came to the skirts of the town I saw the women with their bright-scarlet boddices and picturesque head-gear trooping to or from a fountain with their large copper vessels so gracefully poised, and I heard the cooling sound of plashing waters on every side, and the voices of the youngest or merriest-hearted who were singing on their way. Other troops, on their road to or from another fountain, presented themselves, now crossing, now mingling, now separating, like figures in a stately dance; and every woman of them all carried her head erect like a princess and on it her gold-like vase. 'Twas a scene to paint, not to describe in words. The recollection of it compensates in full for the cruel persecution I that night endured from the gigantic fleas and grosser vermin of antique Venafro.

ROMAN AND NEAPOLITAN HORSES.

THE modes of travelling among the peasants of the Roman states vary according to the nature of the country. In the hilly and mountainous parts they use mules; in the Maremma, or marshy country which lies near the sea, they make frequent use of *carri*, or carts, which have wheels of an enormous diameter, and which are generally drawn by buffaloes; and in the great pastoral plain of the Campagna they sometimes travel in waggons drawn by oxen (which are for the most part of a pretty cream or fawn colour, and which only require a little attention to be stupendous animals, for they are big-boned and of far greater height than our English oxen); but much more frequently they travel on horseback: and here, as in other parts of the south of Italy, curious methods are frequently employed to make one horse carry a whole family on his back. One contrivance is to have a pair of panniers like those put upon our asses. When this is used, the children are stowed in the panniers, the husband sits astride on the shoulder of the horse, and the wife sits astride behind her husband—and not unfrequently there is a third forked rider sitting over the horse's tail. This is considered a very rustical and poor way of travelling. In other cases, instead of the panniers, a framework of wood, not unlike that on which our army surgeons carried their medicine-chests, instruments, &c., while serving in the mountainous parts of Spain and Portugal, but still more like the great wooden machine which the Turks and Arabs put on the backs of their camels, is slung over the back of the horse, from which it depends on either side like panniers. On each side of this frame, two or more persons, as necessity may require, seat themselves, as in a chair, their legs hanging



Famiglia a Cavallo.—From Pinelli.

down to within a short distance of the ground : the bridle-rein is held by a man who sits on the back of the steed. This is called riding with ease and comfort, *con agio e commodità*. I once travelled this way from the poor and desolate town of Brundisium (now Brindisi) as far as the posting road which runs from Lecce to Naples, being unable to procure any other conveyance ; but I bargained for less than the usual load, and so we started and made the journey with myself and portmanteau on one side, which were pretty equally balanced by a Capuchin friar on the other. Great attention is required as to the keeping of a proper equilibrium. They will often make up for a deficient weight on one side with big stones. But, being rather a careless people, such precaution is often neglected, and then one of two things ensues—the over and unequally loaded horse falls on his side, or the *bardello* turns round on the horse's back, and first the heavier and then the lighter side fall among the horse's feet. I have more than once seen a company of travellers in this predicament, not without being amazed, and at a loss to conceive how one single animal could carry such a troop. The Trojan horse could scarcely have held more than the number twice told within his capacious oaken ribs.

It should seem to require a very big and strong horse to carry either the wooden *bardello* or the panniers and its accompaniments : yet, generally, the horses in the south of Italy, though strong and capable of enduring great fatigue, are not distinguished by their size. There is, however, rather a large breed in the Campagna of Rome, as also in some parts of Apulia and Capitanata ; and horses of this breed are in great request in the many districts where there are no wheeled carriages, and where, properly speaking, there are no roads. Yet it is by no means a rare thing to see a poor miserable-looking hack carrying four or five peasants with not less discomfort to them than toil to himself. One would think it pleasanter to trudge on foot, but these people of the plains will never walk if they can in any way be carried ; and to say the truth, the heat of the climate, for at least six

months of the year, renders walking very exhausting work.

In bygone times, but times not at all remote, some of the Roman and Neapolitan nobility took a pride in their studs, and bred beautiful horses, some for the saddle and some for draught. The Borghese family had a remarkably fine breed, of a curious bronze-like colour, with heads, necks, manes, quarters, and legs, resembling the horses which Guido, in his immortal picture, put to the car of Aurora. It was flourishing and numerous as late as the year 1793 : but during the wars and spoliations of the French Revolution, the brood mares were carried off, the whole stock was dispersed, and the type, as far as we could discover, entirely lost. As the French invaders helped themselves, it is probable that most of the Borghese steeds perished in battle or under the toils of the march. There were crosses of the breed as well in Tuscany and the Neapolitan States as in the States of the Church ; but a pure unmixed Borghese I never saw. It was a common and a barbarous custom in the south of Italy to put a distinctive mark on thorough-bred horses by burning them on the flank with a red-hot iron, on the face of which was cut the owner's crest, or a royal crown, or some other device. The poverty consequent upon wars and revolutions, and the establishment, in good part of the Peninsula, of the French law of inheritance, which, in a few generations, must utterly break up the most wealthy families, has prevented the re-formation of good studs, or any extensive attempt to restore the old breeding establishments in Italy. Here and there an amateur is found sufficiently favoured by fortune to have the means of bestowing some attention to breeding ; but, taking all the Peninsula, their collective number is but small. The only horses now bred in the Campagna of Rome are of a mixed and middling breed. They are all black : their form is neither decidedly bad nor decidedly good. They are all entire, and by no means deficient in spirit. Occasionally a horse of truly admirable qualities is found among them. In these railroad days it sounds ridiculous to talk of the speed of any other mode of travelling ; but

a quarter of a century ago I thought it was rare posting, that between Rome and Naples! I certainly never saw so much speed attained by post-horses in any other country, not even in England, and when the post-boys were promised double fees. Most travellers will remember the "*Scampatori*," or "runaways," of the Pontine Marshes. They were all Poledri—colts or very young horses—hot, wild, vicious, and almost unbroken; but for spirit, wind, and speed they were very often astonishing creatures. The mischief and the danger lay in getting them put-to. Very often they had just been caught and brought in from the marshes, or from the great plain beyond them, which is almost as wild as a desert of Arabia. It would often require half-a-dozen men to harness a pair of horses and to prevent their bolting when put-to. With four of these snorting, neighing, kicking and biting equinine devils, the task of putting-to was tremendous! There would be a couple of fellows at every horse's head, holding on with all their might, while the postilions were getting into their saddles; and then, the riders being fairly mounted, there was a whoop and a scream, and away went the *Scampatori* like an arrow from a bow, starting with a gallop, and rarely if ever moderating their pace until they came to the next post-house, some twelve or fourteen English miles off. "There is nothing for it," said an old Neapolitan priest, "but to sit still and say, 'The Lord have mercy upon us.'" As for stopping, there could seldom be question of that, for the poledri had generally the bit between their teeth, and the mastery over their riders. Luckily the road was, for many miles, broad, and as smooth as a bowling-green: but for a long space there was that ugly, deep, draining canal, cut by Pope Pius VI., running close by the side of the road! The post-masters generally kept these poledri in store for the English; "for," said they, "your Milordo always likes to go fast, and he knows what horses are."

The number of horses kept on the vast pastoral farms in the Campagna is a very striking feature of that economy. It was not unusual to find from three hun-

dred to four hundred horses of all sorts on one farm. Many of these, perfectly wild and unbroken, seemed to be kept for no other purpose than that of threshing out the corn, this primitive and rude manner of threshing being common throughout Italy. On these immense farms, no factor, no capo or head of a company of herdsmen, no cattle-driver, ever thinks of walking on foot. If he has only to go a quarter of a mile, he vaults into his cumbersome antiquated saddle. They may be said to pass more than half of their time on horseback. The factor of a friend, who was showing me over a farm, stopped and fell a-panting before we had gone two hundred yards. "For the infantry," said he, "I am bad, but I am good on horseback;" and so he proved himself to be when we all mounted. The stable is generally of an immense size; and besides those that are out, there are always a certain number of horses within, saddled and bitted, and ready to start. Thus mounted, the factor and upper men being armed with muskets, and the herdsmen and cattle-drivers with long lances, they gallop over the plains, looking at a distance very much like a marauding band of wild Arabs. Some of these farm-horses are old and well trained, and singularly patient and docile, often remaining many hours in vedette without being fastened, and exposed all the while to the great heat, and the terrible persecution and rage of the gad-flies, and of other flies bigger and sharper than we ever saw them elsewhere. But many of the steeds are poledri, whose temper and habits I have described. Some of the cattle-drivers break in and train these colts, when they are intended for saddle-horses; when destined for draught, they are sold in their wild state.

The horses of the Campagna are sent into Rome in their wild state, like the Highland and Welch ponies that are driven to our fairs and markets. A French writer says there are coachmen in Rome well skilled in breaking in these wild horses. I confess, for my own part, I could never see any great skill in their rough training. Before putting the bit into the poledro's mouth, they fasten on him a heavy cumbersome head-stall, with a semicircular piece of iron which passes over

his face a little above the nostrils. This clumsy piece of iron has jagged teeth which bite into the flesh. A rope, strong enough to lift an anchor, or a long thick thong made of buffalo's hide, plaited, is attached sometimes to the back of the head-stall, just under the colt's jaw, and by tugging or jerking at it, the poor creature is terribly punished. At other times, as when the colt has to make his gyrations, the rope is attached to a ring in front of the head-stall, this ring being often fastened to the jagged piece of iron. These Roman breakers—and their brethren of the kingdom of Naples are not a whit better—treat the colts they have in training as the old Muscovites are said to have treated their brides on their first taking them home. The very first thing they do is to give them a terrible beating. This, they say, takes the devil out of the poledri, and makes them know and be afraid of their breakers. When the young creature's spirit is very high, they often reduce it by starving him almost to death. After a due course of discipline of this gentle kind, they fix their long rope to the head-stall, and take out the colt to some open level spot of hard ground. The trainer-in-chief holds the end of the rope, being aided in that office by two or three assistants; and while he stands in the centre two or three or more bare-legged fellows make the colt run round in a circle by belabouring him over the flanks and loins with an instrument which bears a much closer resemblance to a flail than to a whip. The flexible part, attached to a long wooden handle which may be called a *pole*, is generally made of the heavy buffalo-hide, twisted and knotted! It is often two or three inches in diameter, and always a cruel and detestable tool. They not only beat the poor animal while he runs round the ring, but they bellow and scream at him, making noise enough to terrify him into madness. This effect is indeed sometimes produced; and the poor colt, instead of describing the prescribed circle, goes off at a tangent, laying prostrate those that are holding the rope, or dragging them after him. When the runaway is recovered they give him another beating, and then stop his provender for a day or so. It was not uncommon to see

the poledro bleeding copiously from the forehead and nose, where the jagged iron had bitten into him, and from the flanks and loins, where the flails had taken out pieces of the skin. We have seen these breaking-rings look more like a place where horses were killed than one where horses were to be trained, the blood lying thick upon the ground, as in a knacker's yard. When they have run the ring for a good many days, a heavy bardello, or wooden saddle, about twice the size and four times the weight of that we see used in England, is put on the colt's back, and reins, fastened to rings on the jagged iron, are thrown over the projecting arms of the bardello to make the colt hold his head up. Thus accoutred, he is again made to gyrate, and some attention is paid to his paces. If he breaks into a gallop, he is brought back into a trot by getting a blow of the flail across his fore-legs. If in cantering he puts what is considered the wrong leg foremost, he gets another swingeing blow over the leg in fault. After due course of discipline of this kind, and when the poor creature trembles at the sight or at the voice of the breaker, a bit of the Turkish or Mameluke fashion, but a great deal heavier and longer in the drop, is put into the mouth, being almost strong enough to break the jaw of an elephant; and with his head tightly reined up, he is made to walk about and to stand for a certain number of hours in the stable. But it is in most cases before this stage that recourse is had to a tremendous operation in order to give that curve of the neck which is so universally admired in Spain and Italy, and indeed most other countries. To give length to the course, a number of strong ropes are spliced or tied together: one end is fastened to the head-stall, behind the colt's jaw, and the other is made fast to a firm-set wooden column, or to an iron ring secured to the ground: the colt is brought near to the column or ring, the rope being so disposed as to run out freely; and then bang go the flails; and out scream the voices of the men; and away goes the terrified colt, running at the top of his speed until he runs out all the rope, and comes down on his side as

though he had been shot through the heart. They call this breaking a colt's neck, and the wonder is that they do not break it mortally. But this, they say, gives that semicircular form which the neck of every gentleman's horse ought to have; and it was in vain to tell them that the same curve might be produced by other and gentle means. When the colt has carried the bit in his mouth for a few days, a heavy demi-pique saddle is put upon his back, and the breaker or one of his aids, accoutred much in the fashion of a South American of the Pampas, adventures in the saddle and puts him to his paces, taking especial care to make him lift up his legs very high, without being very careful whether he puts them down again on nearly the selfsame spot. It was a joke among the English in Spain that the horse of a true or fashionable caballero would caper five minutes over a cabbage-leaf without crossing it. The same joke might have been applied at Rome and Naples thirty years ago; but now, at Naples at least, your men of distinguished fashion imitate the English in horsemanship as in dress and other particulars, and generally ride English-bred and English-trained horses, sneering much at the steeds of their fathers and grandfathers. If the poledri are intended for the carriage, after being ridden for a short time upon that tremendous bit they are put to some heavy carro or cart, and worked in it for some time, each young colt being mostly coupled with a grave old horse. They are then put to a lighter and proper carriage, and their breaking is considered as complete. If they only arch their necks, show a good deal of mane, are broad-chested and very round in the hind quarters, have a long and very thick tail, and lift their legs up to a very unnecessary and fatiguing height, they are very much admired by the Romans.

The inevitable consequence of this harsh training is that the horses are ever afterwards bad-tempered and vicious—mischievous wretches that will resort to every horse-trick to throw you off, and that will kick or bite at you when you are down. In the course of a very long and varied experience I hardly ever knew a Roman or

Neapolitan horse that had gone through this breaking, but was sulky or vicious. At times we found them excessively dull and stupid, as if their spirit had been broken as well as their necks; but even these sluggards would upon a favourable opportunity play some foul trick or other. To all the arguments I could adduce from the different system of breaking used in England and other countries, and from the consequent difference of temper in our horses, their constant and unvarying answer was, "You cut all your horses; our horses are all entire, and so are devils in spirit, and require from us that which they get." But the Arabs and Turks never cut their horses, and yet their horses are as gentle and good-tempered as the best of our English ones. It is as rare to meet with a vicious horse in Turkey, as with a thoroughly good-tempered one in the south of Italy. Except a certain Arab mare at Constantinople which had once belonged to the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope, and which may possibly have been affected by some of her ladyship's eccentricities, or may not have been so gently trained as it ought to have been, I do not remember ever to have ridden a Turkish horse, Barb, or Arab, that could be called decidedly wicked. These creatures, though spirited and free to go, are generally as quiet and as good-natured as lambs. This gentleness of temper is owing to gentle nurture and training. The Arab brings up his high-bred colt like one of his family; he is taken into the tent when the weather is wet or cold, he is the play-mate of the children, an amulet is hung round his little neck to preserve him from the influence of the evil eye, he is cleaned and combed quite as often as the children of the family, and quite as gently; and when in fault he is corrected with as much mildness as if he were his master's son. The Turks, and even the Moors, though apt to be so passionate and cruel towards men, are universally calm and gentle to their horses; beginning their training when very young, but not putting them to anything like work until they are four years old. Thus their horses hardly ever require anything even like what is called breaking in Eng-

land. The affection existing between these Eastern horses and their masters is the subject of many a tale as true as it is touching.

That the same gentle treatment, if begun equally early, would have the same effect upon the fiery horses of Rome, Naples, Calabria, the Capitanata, and Apulia, there can be no rational doubt. Without having any pretension to jockey-skill or the science of the stable, I in my time trained and rode two colts, one a Calabrian, the other an Apulian; and as they had never been through the hands of the breakers, or subjected to any of their barbarous treatment, they turned out as docile and as gentle as could be wished. The Calabrian, who came with a bad character from his dam (but all the Calabrians bore rather a bad reputation for ill-temper and vice, though prized for other qualities), became in a very short time the most trusty and pleasant steed and companion. Moreover, on the great farms and among the country people, where men took up the colts in the rough, and bitted and saddled them without any of the tortuous preliminaries—neither flailing them, nor neck-breaking them—the horses were very generally good-tempered. Those of the *fattori* in the Roman Campagna and in the great pastoral farms on the plain of Apulia and the contiguous districts were eminently so; and yet at the same time full of spirit and capable of bearing immense fatigue. It was in riding across the great Apulian plain on our way to the beautiful recesses, forests, and lake contained within the hollow shell of Monte Gargano—the Garganus of the ancients, where the north winds roar among magnificent oaks, as in the days of Horace*—with a dear friend who had served in Poland and in Russia, who had seen much of war, and ought to have written about it, that I was particularly struck with the

* Aquilonibus

Querceta Gargani laborant.

Lib. ii., Od. 9.

Garganum mugire putes nemus.

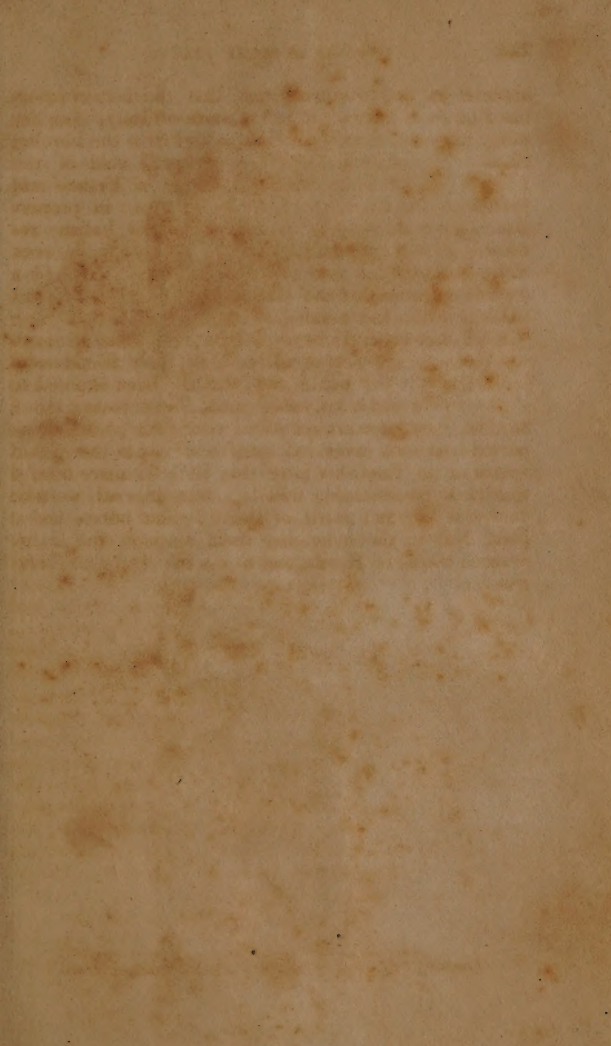
Lib. ii., Ep. 1.

qualities of these rustic horses, and the good martial qualities of their riders. A large band of them came galloping over the plain, crossing our road or track (for road there was none) at right angles; some of their goads or spears were carried erect like a lance in rest; others were couched as if the drove of buffaloes they were going in quest of were already in sight; the rough horses kept up a fine charging pace, and the men, who were hardly ever out of the saddle, sat upon them like fearless and excellent riders. "See!" said my friend, "these are the Cossacks of the south, only better mounted than the Cossacks I saw in the campaign of 1812. Here is a light irregular cavalry, ready made and equipped. These fellows are born to and brought up in the profession of the lance. There are some thousands of them in Apulia alone. If the independence of this country is ever to be fought for, these are the men to fight for it, and to be employed in harassing an enemy on an advance or retreat. They have hardly anything to learn; the habits of their daily life are the habits of the Polish peasants, that form the only really good lancers in any regular European army; the lance is as natural to their hand as it is awkward to others; and see how they ride and how well their long-tailed horses are in hand—you might gallop them round a table." This quality in the horses, which partly depended on the bits to which they had been trained, was frequently matter of surprise to me. It is very needful that they should be well in hand, and able to turn quickly on their haunches, for the long horned cattle are frequently wild and dangerous, and the sulky and cunning-looking buffalo—that looks much more cunning and even more savage than he really is—will often resent a prick with the goad by wheeling suddenly round, and charging at the horse with his lowered horns. Nay, without any further provocation than that of being disturbed in the bogs or swampy places in which they delight to wallow, they will rush upon the herdsman and his steed.

It is a fact known to all the survivors of the Russian campaign of Bonaparte, and mentioned in most of the

histories of that disastrous war, that the horses which the French had drawn from the south of Italy, from the sultry plains of Rome and Apulia, and from the burning climate of Calabria, bore the excessive cold of the Russian winter better than the horses of France and Germany. It was the same with the men: in proportion to their numbers a great many more Italians returned alive than Frenchmen, or Germans, or even Poles. Physicians and philosophers explain this by a doctrine of absorbed and latent heat. Englishmen and Scotsmen who had resided many years in Bengal have told us, that on their return home they suffered much less from the severity of winter than their friends who had never left this island, and who had been exposed to all the rigour and changeableness of our climate; but I believe, they have always added that their stock of imported heat soon expended itself, and that at the second return of an English winter they suffered more from it than their home-staying friends. But, after all, we take it, the vigour and spirit of these Italian horses had a good deal to do in helping them through the snow-covered plains of Russia, and across the ice-bound Berezina.

THE END.





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- III. XII. The Englishwoman in Egypt : Vols. I. & II.
- IV. VII. Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare : Vols. I. & II.
- V. XXV. XXXVIII. LXI. LXX. LXXX. British Manufactures : Series I., II., III., IV., V., & VI.
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